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THE CALL OF THE NEW ERA

WILLIAM MUIR

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ITS OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BY REV.

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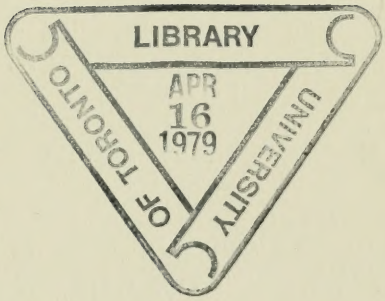

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PREFATORY NOTE

BY

GEORGE SMITH, C.I.E., LL.D., F.R.G.S., F.S.S.

THE unique value of "The Call of the New Era" lies in the fact that (1) it is written by a minister of the Gospel to every fellow-minister and student, to every member and family of the Christian Church; (2) the work combines a scholarly exegesis, spiritual discrimination, and accurate history, all eloquently enforcing the call of the new era. Though the writer makes no direct reference to Neander—the most neglected though still the spiritually ablest of the Church Historians—he shows the same spiritual insight and logical power as that great scholar who passed from Judaism to Platonism, and was led by the Holy Spirit to Evangelical Christianity. The Author states and enforces the Missionary Call to every progressing Christian, from the Old Testament era of preparation, through Christ and the successive Christian centuries to the new era of

to-day. As a Scotsman familiar with the history of the evangelisation of his countrymen, he lightens up the period of Mediæval Missions to and by our own fathers, who first received Christ themselves, and hastened to tell the glad tidings to England and to Europe.

God's providential development and the Church's Christian duty are pursued to the irresistible conclusion—the obedience of every Christian to the Lord's command and the heavenly vision.

G. S.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

ITS OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

"Now is the judgment of this world. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—JOHN 12. 31, 32.

"Human crimes are many, but the crime of being deaf to God's voice, of being blind to all but parchments and antiquarian rubrics when the Divine handwriting is abroad on the sky—certainly there is no crime which the supreme powers do more terribly avenge."—CARLYLE.

"We must take a long run that we may leap the better."—MONTAIGNE.

"Upon the great world's altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God."

TENNYSON.

THE CALL OF THE NEW ERA

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

ITS OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE sense of being on the verge of a new era, and some think on the verge of the last era, is widespread among those who have understanding of the times or are sensitive to the Divine leading in providence and grace. Everywhere those who are at the front and in touch with spiritual movements, whether at home or abroad, feel that somehow the situation is critical to a supreme degree. They are in fear and great joy, and join trembling with their mirth. They are amazed at the unique opportunities of the new epoch, they are bewildered by its unparalleled responsibilities and dangers.

We seem to have reached an age when nations may be born in a day, but when there is also the possibility that the awakening nations may be perverted in the very hour of their birth. There ought to be a Christian regeneration; there may be a Pagan Renaissance. We have come to another of the great watersheds of history, for only the first century and the sixteenth can be compared to the twentieth: and, just as a soul which has been faced by the claims of Christ can never be as it was before, the choice for the nations now is nothing less than that between reformation and deformation, between the peaceful sea and the frozen tide. The call of the new era, like that of Christ Himself, must be a savour either of life unto life or of death unto death.

It is the primary duty of the Church of Christ to enter in and occupy for her Lord whenever and wherever she can; and there were never so many open doors as there are now, each with its eloquent appeal for those who bring tidings of great joy. For all who have ears to hear, the summons to obey the call of the new era is coming with a peculiar emphasis, with the assurance that this command too has the promise bound up with it, and that wherever there is the will to obey there will also be the power. The whole Orient is astir as it never has been before. What with

unrest in India, many-sided awakening in Korea and Japan, and revival here and there in the vast Chinese Empire, the willing worker hardly knows which of the open doors to choose.

In 1908 there were seven hundred Korean students at Tokio, two hundred more than the year before; and of these a hundred were in Bible classes and over forty were baptized Christians. Even among the Mohammedans, so long considered impenetrable, there are signs of a shaking among the dry bones, of a moving among the imperturbable and hitherto immovable; and the defiant attitude of followers of the False Prophet is being strangely modified. Unknown to the Christian world, conferences have been held to discuss the decay of Islam, and prevent its disintegration in presence of the modern spirit of inquiry and change. The first of these was held at Mecca in the year 1899, and the second at Cairo in 1907, the subject of conference then being, "The Causes of the Decay of Islam."

In view of the history of Islam, the significance of this is overwhelming, showing as it does that not even Mohammedanism can stand against the pervasive influence of the Bible and of Bible-inspired civilisation. Whatever else Modernism is doing, it is breaking up the fallow ground, and is at work in all lands; and who knows how soon there may

be a religious movement in the Mohammedan world analogous to that of the Young Turks in politics, which has already worked such wonders in regions far too long regarded as practically hopeless by many Christians. That the new movement in the Turkish Empire has brought Mohammedans and Christians into line with each other, and that unbiased observers say it is due most of all to the beneficent leavening work of the Robert College and the American Missionaries, are striking reminders that the new era has dawned in the Near East as well as in the Far East. In Persia there is the promise of freedom of thought hitherto unknown, while in Morocco the new ruler is inclined to be friendly. All through Africa, too, there is a great crisis wherever the New Mohammedanism is at work. In vast regions in the Soudan and Central Africa, the supreme question just now is whether Islam or Christianity is to be first in the field, whether Mohammed or Christ is to be the Master of awakening Africa.

For those who have been ground down by witchcraft and slavery, and enveloped in the most cruel darkness, even Mohammedanism would mean an uplift; and its work of evangelisation is easier than that of the Christians, since it is a religion for the natural man, and no moral or spiritual conversion is needed for transference from one side to the

other. But if in any sense it is a good, it is the good which is the enemy of the best.

Nor is it for Eastern peoples alone that the crisis has come. The present predominance of social interests in the homelands is but the proof that empty hearts are crying out in their loneliness for the living God. If the Churches in Great Britain and America have no eyes for the beckoning hands, no hearts to thrill with glad response to the dawn of the new day, they will doom themselves to disaster and decay, to blindness and false doctrine. Surely, when the enemy is beginning to waver at the very centre, the time has come to call up all the reserves and win the day.

Our gracious God is never before His time, nor is He ever behind. If we are to hear this new call as we ought, we must know something of the long train of events which have given it birth, and how it has grown out of the ages which are long since gone. Goethe had it that the universe, as we know it, is the living garment of God; and that is even more true of the history of the ages from the Christian view-point, as His purpose of grace has been unfolded and is being unfolded still. Similarly, for Carlyle history was a larger Bible, which contains, for all who have an eye and a soul to read aright, a clear record of God's dealings with men. If we are to be in full sympathy with

the message and appeal of our own time, we must follow with reverence the apocalypse of the ages and see what God has wrought. To company with Christ in His glorious march down through history, and see Him "weaving the living robe of divinity upon the rushing loom of time," is to come under the power of an appeal which is cumulative and irresistible.

For the most part, God's revelation of Himself has been made through historical events. He has clothed His message of salvation in gracious concrete deeds; and there is no reason for believing that He has ceased either to intervene in the affairs of men or to show forth His purpose and glory to loyal souls. The Holy Ghost Who taught the Apostle Peter, through his intercourse with Cornelius, that Christianity could be no mere appanage of Judaism; who taught Bunyan that men must not be allowed to silence those whom God has commanded to speak; and who taught Whitefield and Wesley, through men and women won at field-preachings, that they must have done with the prejudice that the Gospel could be proclaimed only in consecrated buildings, or by those on whom the hands of a bishop had been laid, is teaching us that the Great Commission of the risen Lord to preach the Gospel to every creature was meant to be taken literally, and

that Christians can disobey it only at their peril.

Beyond question the Foreign Mission work of modern times has done much to deepen the life of the Church through that light which obedience never fails to bring; but Christians everywhere must follow on in that pathway still more strenuously, if the discoveries and inventions of the new era are to be a blessing and not a curse. To study the Divine revelation as it has been made historically in Divine deeds, and is now culminating in the ends of the earth, is not only to be in line with modern thought at its best; it is to follow the stream of grace all the way from its source in the heart of the Eternal, and to see beauty and blessing spring forth wherever it flows.

Those who accustom themselves to listen to God's voice in the past cannot fail to hear what He is saying now. They know the voice of the Good Shepherd, even when He speaks in unwonted ways; and He is ever speaking to reverent and God-fearing souls, since for them to hear is to obey. In speaking of the triumphal entry of our Lord St. John says: "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him."

So as the years went past, and the Empire was won, and there were Christians all over the earth, new light was shed on the universality of the Divine love and on the magnitude of the Divine purpose, as well as on the methods of the Divine working; and in this new light many a prediction and event in Scripture became instinct with fresh meaning and power. Nor can it be otherwise with believers yet, if they journey with the self-revealing God of all grace, as He has made Himself known throughout the ages, and has never left Himself without a witness even in the darkest days.

CHAPTER I

THE ERA OF PREPARATION

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low."—Isa. 40. 4.

"Israelite prophetism was a journalism speaking in the name of God."—Renan.

"I know the right and say the right and yet the wrong pursue."
—*Latin Saying.*

CHAPTER I

THE ERA OF PREPARATION

THE roots of the universality and spirituality of Christianity are without question to be found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and in the great historical interventions of the self-revealing Jehovah therein recorded. All through that Dispensation there were hints and anticipations of the Divine purpose of salvation for the heathen—forecasts and prophecies of the Messiah, Who in the fulness of time was to break down the walls of separation and claim the whole world for Himself. Nor does this depend on the testimony of particular texts. It is the whole burden and meaning of a Dispensation which was manifestly a time of preparation for the coming Christ, Who was to speak to all the heavy-laden, and to be lifted up from the earth that He might draw all men unto Him.

As far back as the Book of Genesis, Israel is set forth as an ordinary branch on the stock of humanity ; and when Abraham was called, it was in

order that in him all the families of the earth might be blessed. The very thought of Israel as the first-born of God implied that the other nations were to share in their Father's grace and love. Jewish exclusiveness has often been set over against Christian universality by way of contrast; but the purpose of that exclusiveness must be borne in mind if it is to be understood. St. Paul, who grew up in the midst of it and knew it from within and at its strongest, thought of it as the preparation for the universality which was to follow, and to which he was so loyal. The method of seclusion was Divinely chosen and insisted on with a view to the grand result in Christ. The nation through which the whole world was to be blessed could only advance in the knowledge and service of the true God by being temporarily secluded from all other nations.

It is obvious now to students of history that the defeat of the English by the French in the days of Joan of Arc was a conspicuous blessing for the Island Kingdom. But for that expulsion which drove her behind her natural boundary, the sea, England would have been part of a great continental power, and could never have developed her true national life, nor would she have become the home of freedom and the mother of parliaments. Isolation was necessary for ultimate expansion;

separation was the pathway to growth. And it was even so with Israel of old. But for the walls which shut them in, the chosen people could never have done the unique work to which they were called in the election of grace; nor could the Branch which was yet to flourish in every land have grown up within the sacred enclosure as He did.

The reformation in Ezra's time, for example, deliberately aimed at fostering that spirit of exclusiveness which gave such offence to the other nations, and lent some colour to the charge made by Tacitus and others, that the Jews were the enemies of the human race, a charge responsible for much persecution. Yet it has been shown that even then, and side by side with this separatism, a proselytising spirit was developed; and Josephus expressly states that even Gentiles who were not proselytes might have sacrifices offered in the Temple. The walls were built in the interest of those without in the wilderness, as well as of those within in the garden; and they were not only to be kept standing until the Messiah came—they were to be kept standing in order that He might come. Jewish exclusiveness, in short, when rightly understood, was no more contradictory of the ultimate spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth than the separation to which Christians are still called

is contradictory of the Great Commission to preach the Gospel in every land.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that multitudes of the Jews should forget that they were not chosen for their own sakes alone, and that many should become Separatists or Pharisees in an unworthy sense. But the choicer spirits, who saw things in the light of the eternal, were always aware, and aware most of all in the dark days of captivity and declension, that the enclosure was only temporary, and that the walls were to be thrown down whenever their Divine purpose had been served. Even while among those who were nursed in religious pride, there grew up a bitter hostility to the idea of the conversion of the heathen, and their participation in the covenant mercies of Israel, there was always something of a Missionary conscience among the nobler Jews. The prophets foresaw the day when all nations would be gathered into the one family of God, and would enjoy the blessings of the law which went forth from Jerusalem.

The Book of Jonah, for example, exposes the folly of the jealousy which some cherished, and shows that God had permitted repentance even to the Gentiles; while Isaiah and Jeremiah, who were peculiarly the evangelical prophets, taught that the Golden Age was still to come, and that when it did come the Gentiles would share in its glory

and righteousness. Their great visions are still full of inspiration and hope. The earth is to be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. God's judgments are sent that the nations may learn that Israel's God is the God of all the earth. The moral beauty of Israel's laws and the righteousness of the Messianic King are to draw the eyes of the heathen to the true God. Israel is to be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the land. The sons of the stranger are to be brought to God's holy mountain, and made joyful in His house of prayer. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Jehovah's suppliants, even the daughters of the dispersed, are to bring their offering.

Much else there was which has already been fulfilled, along with much also which our eyes are yet to behold of the redemption of the whole earth. In the last chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah reaches the unique height—unique, that is, even for him —that those of the Gentiles who escaped the great overthrow would themselves carry the Gospel of God's mighty deeds to the most distant heathen lands.

Even the Apocryphal books are not without hints of a purpose of grace for the whole world. That it is not at all pronounced there, may be due in part to the fact that these books date

from a time of Jewish subjection to Gentile Empires, cruel and oppressive. But it is there, as for example in Wisdom vi. 1–21, xi. 23–26; Tobit xiii. 3, 4, 6, 11; 2 Esdras i. 24, viii. 6.

All through the Old World the doctrine of tribal or local deities prevented anything like Foreign Missions in our sense. Every god had his own domain, and ruled his own people alone. There was one deity for the mountains, and another for the plains; one for Edom, and another for the Philistines; and each nation was content that it should be so. Converts in our sense were not sought for; and proselytes were apt to be looked on as renegades as well as turncoats, disloyal to their nation as well as to their gods. Although the Jews in this, as in so much else, were partly an exception to the rule, they were also influenced by this conception, and tended to look on Jehovâh as a tribal deity like Chemosh or Dagon. From the earliest times they had been taught that there was one only living and true God, and that all the other gods were idols, deaf and blind and dumb. But it was long before they realised all that this involved; and Jonah seems to have imagined that he could flee from Jehovah to a land where His arm could not reach him, very much as fugitives from Britain used to flee to Spain because no extradition treaty was in operation there. Yet there

was always a note of universality in the prophetic outlook; while all through the history, in such events as the call of Abraham and the reception of Ruth, there were premonitions of the glad time when Messiah would come to take away the sins of the whole world. The election of Israel was an election of grace, that through them all men might come to know the Lord; and their walling-in was a step towards the ultimate conquest of the world for God.

It is not easy to reproduce now the tone of contempt, and even loathing, with which the Greeks spoke of the barbarians—that is, of all who had not the culture of Greece. As for the Romans, their word "hostis," which at first had meant simply a stranger, came to mean a foe, as if the two were very much the same. But all through there had been a very different law for the Hebrews—a law both beautiful and pathetic: "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." And so Christ still says to believers: "Ye know the heart of those who are still in the darkness, seeing ye were once in the darkness yourselves"; and the walls which shut Israel in were never so high that eyes with the love-light in them could not see over them.

In some respects these Old Testament premonitions of the better time which was coming, of the

Golden Age which did not lie away back in Eden but was to come in Christ, reach their high-water mark in Jeremiah's wonderful prophecy of the New Covenant. Although that was written in prison, and in the midst of the siege which was to complete the Captivity, the great word looks out over the evil present with a truly Christian optimism, and tells of a covenant which was to be universal, because it was to be spiritual, and of a glad time when all shall know the Lord, from the least even to the greatest.

What this meant was made explicit only when Christ Himself came and sealed this New Covenant with His blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. And for long the full perception of the truth that the Gentiles could enter into full participation in the blessings of salvation otherwise than through the portals of Judaism, was only for those who were caught up into the third heaven and saw the unspeakable sights. It broke slowly even on the Apostles, with all their training while Jesus was with them and through the Holy Ghost Who came at Pentecost. It only became explicit, indeed, in the supremely Missionary ministry of St. Paul. There is no indication, for example, that even Isaiah, who delighted in the Mission of Israel to be the light of the Gentiles, ever regarded conformity to Israel's laws as un-

necessary on their part. Salvation then meant absorption in Israel. Not that we are warranted in holding that Isaiah would have held that conformity involved what the enemies of St. Paul said it must involve. They held that in order to become Christians the heathen must also become Jews.

There is indeed a very real sense in which the heathen must still conform to the laws of Israel if they are to enter the Kingdom, as St. Paul was the foremost to assert. The Christian is not under law but under grace, whether he be Jew or Gentile to begin with; but the moral law of Moses comes with a new imperative, and with the most sacred sanctions, to those who are now the children of God and under the perfect law of liberty. It is no more than the truth to say that for the heathen salvation still means absorption in the Israel of Abraham and Isaiah, of Jeremiah and Zephaniah. For that true and spiritual Israel the ritual law was never more than a temporary expedient which has long since served its day.

This is not the place to discuss at length why the Covenant of Grace was made with Israel and not with another race. It may be, indeed, that the Semitic peoples are distinguished above all others by what has been called a capacity for religion, and that they were specially marked out as fitted to be the depositaries of revelation. They are also

without special capacity for speculative thought. The revelation committed to Israel retained its practical simplicity, and remained a religion without becoming either a philosophy or a theology ; which could not have been had it been entrusted to such a people as the Greeks. But for Israel herself it was enough that God had chosen her to be the medium of His choice of others and of His grace to others. That must meanwhile be enough for us too. The whole history of Israel was her preparation for the work of world evangelisation, which was to begin when the Dayspring from on high arose to give light to them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Yet in some respects the universality which underlay the Old Testament was less in evidence when Jesus came than it had been at many an earlier epoch. The exclusiveness of the Jews culminated in the post-Exilian period, when, in default of the political influence they had lost, the Jews became more resolute in their devotion to the worship of Jehovah, and surrounded their faith and worship alike with an elaborate system of ritual. The nearer heathenism came to them as a nation, and the more vigorously it penetrated into Palestine, the more did those who were loyal to Jehovah feel called on to oppose it fiercely. The position of the pious Israelite was indeed difficult in those days

of Roman occupation and of the inroads of Greek culture. On the one hand, there was daily contact with the claims and menace of heathenism ; while on the other hand, the zeal of the scribes was constantly increasing the number of ways in which such contact might bring defilement none the less real that it was only ceremonial. Never had the walls of partition risen so high as when Christ came ; nor had Jewish exclusiveness ever gathered round it heroism more splendid than in the days of the Maccabees, that Indian summer of the old era.

Yet, in spite of all these adverse and alien influences which were at work, when the fulness of time came, there was a sacred plantation of the true Israel which was indeed the garden of the Lord for the reception of the seed of salvation. The story of Simeon and of Anna, the reference in the sacred record to those in Jerusalem "that looked for redemption," combined with the welcome which the common people gave to our Lord, all indicate that when in due time Christ died for the ungodly, there were many eyes with the far-off look in them which told that they saw Him Who is invisible, and had never altogether lost sight of the Divine purpose of their seclusion as a nation. Then at last the walls were thrown down, and the great deeps of the Divine love and pity were disclosed to Gentile and Jew alike.

The God of salvation had already looked down in compassion on His people; but now He came down among them, and Christ took up and completed the work which had been begun. The principles of universality and spirituality which had been so long shadowed forth, and had so often been obscured, were now made explicit in His doctrine that the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of righteousness and love; and in His doctrine that God is a Spirit Who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and is the Father of the souls of men, welcoming the returning penitent on the sole condition that he repents and has faith. He taught men that God is the Father of all, and that the terms of acceptance with Him are such as all men can and ought to fulfil.

But this era of preparation takes us far beyond the narrow confines of the Holy Land. Negatively and positively alike, the whole world-history had been a preparation for Christ. For one thing, this came out in the strange eclecticism, the pathetic expectancy, which was manifesting itself in so many ways when Christ came to die for those who were finding out that they were without strength. The utter failure even of the best that had survived from the religions and philosophies of the Old World to satisfy the yearnings of those who had been made for God and could only find rest in

Him, rendered many unexpectedly amenable and receptive. Even in the heathen world there was something akin to the spirit which had led Simeon and Anna to wait for the redemption of Israel. For ages the best and the worst alike had been experimenting; their experiments one and all had ended in disaster and death.

The history of the philosophy of Greece, of the law system of Rome, and in some respects even of the religion of the Jews, had made it obvious that unless God in His mercy came to the rescue, hope must utterly disappear from the earth. That very discovery, however, was one of the proofs that God had come to the rescue and had been preparing mankind for the great Rescuer, even Christ. Nor can we ignore the work of preparation which was done by the Roman Empire, that triumph of organisation and rule. Renan doubtless exaggerated when he said that if Alexander and Cæsar had not preceded, Christ had not followed; but that was the exaggeration of a sublime truth. By welding the nations into one political state, by making Latin and Greek known everywhere, and by its splendid laws and administration, the Empire did much to open up a way for the first preachers of Christ and salvation to the heathen. Our God is a sovereign Lord, Who still lays claim to wireless telegraphy and all

the wonders of modern science for the work of evangelisation.

The Empire did much also for the work of expansion by the universal peace it secured among all the civilised peoples, and by its splendid means of communication which did so much for the first Missionaries of the Cross. The means for travel were better in the days of Paul and John than at any subsequent period right up to the time when the inventions of our own era began to change the face of the earth.

There was yet another way in which the work of preparation was being done, and in that the Empire and the Jews may be said to have joined hands in claiming all the world for Christ. This was the extraordinary dispersion of the Jews, which familiarised the Gentiles with the thought of monotheism and a spiritual religion. It is not easy now to realise how great was the educative work done by those Jews of the Diaspora. The Hellenist Jews, the Grecians or Greek-speaking Jews of the Acts of the Apostles, far outnumbered the Jews of the Fatherland, and were to be found not only all over the Empire, but far beyond it. There were, for example, many of them in Parthia, which still maintained its independence, and must therefore have had attractions for the Jews, who hated Rome as the tyrant in the homeland. One captivity after

another had carried Jews into foreign lands, and, as their wont was, they had thriven in their exile. Besides these, many had gone voluntarily from their homes in Judea and Galilee to the centres where their compatriots were already settled, in search of employment and a wider sphere of activity than Palestine in its degradation afforded for those who were able and ambitious.

How enormous the numbers of the Dispersed were may be gathered from the fact that a census taken in the reign of Nero showed that more than 2,700,000 of them were at Jerusalem for a Passover feast; and it is said that even more were able to be present at the Feast of Pentecost. There were multitudes of Jews in Egypt, where Alexandria was their headquarters, as well as in Arabia, Cilicia, and Cyrene. As for Rome, the extent of the Jewish colony there may be estimated from the fact that in the reign of Claudius as many as 4000 Jewish freedmen were banished at one time from the Imperial city to Sardinia. And many representatives of these foreign Jews, who, as is so often the case, were more Jewish in their sympathies and their allegiance to the old ways than the Jews in the homeland, *hiberniores hibernicis ipsis*, were won for Christ on the ever-memorable Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came on the waiting Church. Their return to their homes all

through the Empire and beyond must have done much to prepare for the preachers who were ere long to follow.

Then further, when the evangelists who were scattered abroad after Stephen's death went out on their Mission, we are specifically told that they went to these Jews of the Dispersion. So also when Paul was at his Missionary work, although he was the Apostle of the Gentiles and had them allotted to him as his special sphere, just as Peter was pre-eminently the Apostle of the Diaspora, we find that he always went first to the Jewish headquarters in a town, and began by preaching in the synagogues of his fellow-countrymen. Nor should it ever be forgotten that although many of these scattered Jews were fanatically and even malignantly hostile, many of them were also pioneers of the faith, noble Missionaries of the Cross, and that even from among the Pharisees and the Sadducean priests, so alien to begin with, there were not a few who believed and gave heroic proofs of their loyalty to their faith and their Lord.

This, then, was the world, so marvellously prepared for Him, into which Christ came in the fulness of time. And most of all, then as now, men were prepared for Him by their utter need. The world was very weary and sated as it cried

out in its dumb strivings, "Who will show us any good?" In the great mercy of our God, the answer came in Christ. Little real belief in the old systems was left, and the truth of the terrible picture in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as to the state of morality, is borne out in endless ways. Nor was philosophy one whit more influential than religion so far as stemming the evil tide was concerned. It was into a world corrupt to the core, and hopeless in its unbelief, that the light of the Gospel first shone, and the era of preparation came to an end in the ever-blessed era of evangelisation.

CHAPTER II

THE APOSTOLIC ERA

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—MARK 16. 15.

"This is a fallen world, but it is a redeemed world."

"Our dear Lord's best interpreters are faithful human souls,
The gospel of a life like theirs is more than creeds or scrolls."

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue but the highest incentive to its practice."—LECKY.

CHAPTER II

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THIS wonderful period of expansion, the new era even more than our own, may be taken as extending from the Ascension of our Lord till the end of the first century, when the long life of St. John was either just coming to an end or had not long ended. For our purpose, however, it may more conveniently be taken as extending from Pentecost to the year 112 or thereby, when Pliny sent his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan. Pliny was one of the most accomplished men of his time; and this official document throws welcome light on the situation when the Church was entering on the work of the second century, and had no longer the guidance and help of the inspired Apostles who had seen the Lord. His testimony, too, as to the extent to which the Gospel had spread in Asia Minor, and as to how the life of the Christians had impressed an impartial outsider, is of unique value as showing

what had been achieved in the era which had just closed.

In the days of His flesh, our Lord Himself never left the Holy Land, except perhaps when He went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. But He laid deep and broad the foundations on which His people were to build in the days to come; He began that work of the Kingdom which cannot but be universal, since it is spiritual; and already in vision He saw the peoples of the East and the West, of the North and the South, rallying round His Cross. His instructions regarding Missionary work are more definite than those about any other form of service. Time after time He gave orders that such work was to be done, from the day when He called the fishermen by the Sea of Galilee to be fishers of men, till the day when as the Risen Lord He commissioned His Apostles to make disciples of all nations. The very name Apostle indicates that those who bore it were to be messengers or Missionaries, first to the lost sons of their own house, then to the cities of the Samaritans, and then on the highways of world-traffic, which led to the most distant heathen nations.

To carry the Gospel to the Gentiles was a work so novel and so difficult that commands and encouragements alike were multiplied in order that

it might be done. The earlier orders to go to their own countrymen had been only temporary; but when the standing orders to go out among the heathen came, they only made explicit what had really been implicit from the first. His followers were called to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." His great parting Commission has indeed been pronounced to be the product of a later age; but there are no good grounds, either critical or other, for doubting that we have here Christ's own words. The Trinitarian formula is "foreign to the mouth of Jesus only in the sense that any saying uttered for the first time by any man is foreign to his lips."

The Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost vividly illustrated both what the Great Commission meant and how it was to be obeyed; for then as now the supreme question was one of power. Yet even the Apostles were slow to lift their anchors and adventure out on the deep. One object-lesson after another was required for the interpretation of what seems clear enough now in the light of its exposition in history. Indeed, persecution had to come before they went everywhere preaching the Word. But when once this violent dispersion had released the slumbering powers of expansion, every man and woman of the dispersed became a Missionary. After Stephen's

death, for example, they went as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch which ere long became a second Christian metropolis. Perhaps some went as far as Rome, for Andronicus and Junia, who are mentioned in the Epistle to that church, were disciples before Paul. Indeed, one of the striking features of the expansion is that often the decisive steps seem to have been taken by nameless evangelists, who did not keep silence about the new faith for which they were wanderers and exiles. The whole theory of Apostolic Missions is summed up in the words of St. Peter: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Their message grew out of their own personal experience, and was attested by it.

The first decisive indication of God's purpose regarding the regions beyond came to the Church through a revival which broke out among the Samaritans; for then, as always, the Divine message came most clearly in actual events. These Samaritans, who were half-heathen by descent, professed a corrupt form of Judaism, and Philip the Evangelist was honoured to be the preacher under whom many of them turned to Christ. Our Lord Himself had, of course, done tender, gracious things among them during His earthly ministry; yet that revival came as a revelation, we might almost say as a surprise, to the Apostles

at Jerusalem. They were, however, ready to follow wherever the Spirit led, and were prepared to be surprised. They saw the Gospel passing beyond the confines of the Jews, and they knew by the fruits of Philip's preaching that he had done right in going among the Samaritans. They knew it then just as in later years Bunyan knew that God had opened his lips, and Wesley knew that it was right to preach in the open air, by the blessing which God gave them. Then the wholly Gentile Cornelius followed the half-Gentile Samaritan into the fold of Christ, and his conversion ranks with that of St. Paul himself as a great landmark in the history of Missions.

The extent to which it was epoch-making can be estimated in part by the space given to the details of the story by the sacred writer, as well as by the way in which St. Peter had to vindicate his action in baptizing a man who had never been circumcised. For part of the significance of what happened lies in the fact that Cornelius became a Christian without also or first becoming a Jew. The conclusion to which the authorities at Jerusalem were led by the blessed logic of events marks the beginning of the Foreign Mission era: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." They realised what God

was saying to them in the concrete events through which He rendered His purpose of grace visible to those who had eyes to see, and they gladly followed on to know the Lord.

And it was well that they were thus prepared for the next emergency, which was near at hand. For meanwhile, some of the scattered preachers, pressing on in the pathway which the Holy Spirit was opening up for them, were boldly preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles in Antioch, and there also the blessed fruits of their daring were showing that they were doing the will of God. We cannot tell whether these preachers had heard of the conversion of Cornelius; but that precedent enabled the Jerusalem church to deal with the new situation in the right way. God had graciously prepared His people to meet the emergency. Barnabas was sent down to see what God was doing, and to give guidance in the crisis. With a prescience equally Divine, St. Paul was brought in to be his colleague in the work which grew out of the Antioch revival, and then the work of winning the Gentiles for Christ was begun in earnest, and the great Apostle of the Gentile world was at his God-assigned post.

From the time of Pentecost onwards it was clearly indicated that in this work of expansion the Holy Ghost is the great propagating power. Ours is a Missionary era because it is the era or dispensa-

tion of the Holy Ghost. It was He who inspired the first Missionaries, such as Peter and Stephen, Barnabas and Paul, for the work of winning mankind for Christ—"Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"; and we shall only understand the secret of their triumphs, or see them repeated in our day, when we too are wholly loyal to the ever-blessed Third Person in the glorious Trinity, and are obedient unto Him.

From the first, too, these Missionaries of the Cross found that they were called to conflict; and that in their onset for God and His truth they were in direst opposition to the dominant world-powers, political and ecclesiastical alike. Christianity had scarcely emerged from Palestine when she found herself engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the whole strength of Imperial Rome. The Romans, who had a genius for government as well as for conquest, were accustomed to tolerate all religions if only these were old and national and had no secret gatherings which might cover conspiracies against the State. But from the first they were at least doubtful about Christianity, which was neither national nor ancient, and which had a worship they could not understand.

Even their wisest statesmen seem to have felt an instinctive dread of this new religion, which had

neither temples nor idols, and which rose superior to every local or racial limitation, claiming the whole earth for its Lord. They felt somehow that Christianity and Rome were alike imperial in their aspirations and outlook, and that war between them was inevitable. Either the one or the other must conquer. There was no room in the Empire, vast as it was, for both; and the prevalence of this conviction among the best of the Romans gives us some idea of the courage and consistency with which the early Christians did their work.

There was room in the Pantheon for all sorts of tribal deities. The presence of their idols there only made the glory of Rome seem all the greater, and increased the triumphs of her returning soldiers. But there was no room either in the Pantheon or the Empire for this new religion, which was sometimes called "atheistic" because it lacked the ordinary external symbols, but which had gone out conquering and to conquer, measuring its might with that of Imperial Rome herself. When Christianity, with a sublime audacity, assailed the Empire which in itself had almost become a religion, with the Emperor as its concrete and deified embodiment, the onset was made on no ignorant or degraded system, but on a vast organisation, hoary with antiquity and flushed with success over every foe.

In many ways, indeed, the work of the first evangelists was not unlike that which our own Missionaries have to do now among the educated and self-satisfied Hindus and Mohammedans. This explains the paradox that some of the best emperors and noblest Romans, from the view-point of the Empire, were the most strenuous foes and persecutors of the Gospel. They saw, as St. Paul did in his unconverted days, that there could be no half-measures where Christianity was involved. They felt that they must either yield to its claims or set themselves to crush it out. Thus it was that it was into a world at once strangely prepared for them, and yet bitterly antagonistic to them, that the first Missionaries went with their story of salvation for the worst, on terms of free grace.

It is very remarkable how little we know about these first evangelists themselves, although many things have come to light even in our own time to show how devoted and fruitful their work was. Some of them we know by name—men like Timothy and Titus, Barnabas and Mark, Epaphroditus and Apollos—and that is all we know even of the majority of the Apostles. We know a little about Paul, a little less about Peter and John, and that is practically the whole. There were no religious newspapers in those days, nor any Missionary

reports; but their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, and they live in their work, which is ever so much better than living merely in the pages of history. Through the mists of envious oblivion, broken here and there by shafts of light, we can see brave soldiers of the Cross, as they faced every danger in their devotion to their Saviour and their compassion for the souls of men, and pressed out into the deeper darkness beyond the boundaries of the Empire as even the dauntless soldiers of Rome did not dare to do. Within the first Christian century they had penetrated the wilds of distant Scythia and Caledonia, perhaps even so far as India; dying for their faith if need be, bringing hope to many a despairing soul and kindling the love-light in many a sorrowful eye.

In the absence of any reliable information, tradition has been busy with many of these unknown workers and their work. But its only value is that it embodies the general impression of the striking results of their undoubted enterprise. Andrew is represented as preaching in Scythia, Thomas in Parthia, Matthew in Arabia. Matthias is said to have devoted himself to Ethiopia; James the son of Alphæus to Egypt; Simon Zelotes to Mauritania and Libya; and Judas Thaddeus to Mesopotamia. The Spaniards claim James the brother of our Lord as their national evangelist;

the French say that the Gospel came to their land through Dionysius the Areopagite and Lazarus; while as regards Britain, it is claimed that Simon Zelotes, Joseph of Arimathea, and even Paul, preached the Gospel there. But all this is little more than a determination to apportion territories to the men whose names have come down to us.

It is very striking how little is known even of John and Peter, the pillar Apostles. They are prominent in the early chapters of the Acts, where they are closely associated with each other; but after that we are left largely to conjecture as to what they did and where they did it. St. John's later doings mostly gather round Ephesus, where he seems to have lived almost, if not quite, to the end of the first century, and to have perished by martyrdom in the persecution under Domitian. He has left us three Letters; the Gospel which bears his name; and the Book of the Apocalypse, or unfolding.

As for St. Peter, his name became associated, probably against his will, with the Judaising party, who in their opposition to Paul declared, "We are of Cephas." There has been much discussion as to whether he was ever in Rome. There can be none as to the fact that he was not the founder of the church at Rome, as Romanists allege. Many modern scholars accept the tradition of a visit to

the seven-hilled city; and by the end of the second century the conviction prevailed that he was martyred there. But there is no proof whatever of this in the "dry light," and there is much to support the contention that he had no association whatever with the Roman church. His Epistles seem to connect him very specially with the four Roman provinces which we now call Asia Minor; and we must think of him as for the most part in that region, and specially as labouring among his fellow-countrymen according to the concordat with Paul, until he too won the martyr's crown.

The conversion of St. Paul, about the year 35, was of infinite significance for the work among the heathen; and it is his Missionary energy which most of all fills the New Testament. We have some details as to his three great Missionary journeys; and what with references and allusions in his Letters and what we learn from the Acts, we can draw at least a profile picture of the man, unquestionably one of the supreme leaders of our race. His first journey began at Cyprus and ended at Antioch, and saw many converts won and not a few churches organised. The second journey began in the year 52 and took him into Europe, where he founded a church at Philippi and spent two years and a half in Corinth. The third journey, which brings us down to the year 55, took him

from Antioch through Asia Minor to Ephesus, where he remained more or less constantly for upwards of two years. Thereafter we find him in Jerusalem, where he was apprehended and finally sent to Rome, which he had long desired to visit. After two imprisonments there, and much literary and other work, he died for the faith for which he had lived splendidly so long, in the year 67 or 68. He was the greatest Missionary who has ever lived, perhaps the greatest servant our Lord has ever had.

We can only find out indirectly how these Apostolic Missionaries did their work, and what was the outcome of their obedience and consecration. But this indirect evidence is continually increasing in interest and value. The ends of the earth are now coming on us, and new light is constantly being thrown on the rapid and inevitable spread of the Christian religion. Take, for example, what we now know of the different ways in which the various churches were founded and grew up—such as those in Rome and Galatia. The Roman church was not founded by an Apostle, and no great name is associated with its origin. Some have attributed its beginnings to preachers who came from Pentecost filled with the Good News. Probably, however, its existence was due rather to unknown emigrants, and to the constant communication which was always taking

place between the capital and the rest of the Empire. From the first, too, the large Jewish element in the city would be specially interested in what was going on and was turning the world upside down. A thoughtful modern writer prefers to account for its origin by what he calls the "process of quiet and as it were fortuitous filtration" which was everywhere going on—a pregnant suggestion well worth following up.

Primitive Christianity was self-propagating. The great farewell Commission, as a formal injunction, came to be unnecessary. The impulse was in the Gospel itself. Not that the method of filtration was the only method at work. In Galatia we know that the church was founded by the great Missionary of the Gentiles, who was taken there on one of his epoch-making tours. He was passing through the district, probably without any intention of remaining in it, when he was struck down by his thorn in the flesh, whatever that was, and had to remain for a time. But Paul could never be anywhere, even in sickness, without being an evangelist; and the result was a community or church of the living God. And so with the other churches. Each has its own gracious history, and each tells of faithful workers known or unknown.

Among the agencies at work, Christian philan-

thropy was one of the most persuasive. All that men needed was to be found in Christ; and in that era He was preached and lived by those for whom He had been everything and through whom His glory shone forth. It was not proselytes they sought. Their efforts were not put forth to secure numbers or authority, but to bless men through Him Who alone could understand or save them. The true Missionary enthusiasm depends on being possessed by the Divine passion of love to seek and save the lost.

Much discussion has gathered round the extent to which the Mission work of the Apostolic Era was successful alike extensively and intensively; in point of numbers and in point of influence. One calculation which has been often handed round has it that at the close of the first century there was a Christian population of about five millions; whereas another has it that there were probably about two hundred thousand, a discrepancy which at least shows how little definite information we possess. We know enough, however, to suggest that the smaller figure is a gross under-estimate, and that the larger is probably nearer the truth.

Some idea of the extent of the progress made may be derived from what took place during the persecutions under Nero and Domitian. Tacitus

says that during the dreadful Neronic persecution an immense multitude suffered for what he calls their superstition; and it was not otherwise in the later persecution under Domitian which began in the year 95. There are also various references in the literature of the period to events in Rome, which support the contention that very great progress had been made. As early as the year 52, for example, according to Suetonius, the disturbances in the Jewish quarter in Rome, owing to disputes between Jews and Christians, were such that the Emperor Claudius was led to banish all Jews from the city. Then, only six years later, in the year 58, Paul himself, in his letter to the Romans, speaks of their faith as "proclaimed through the whole world"; while other six years after, that is in the year 64, as we have just seen, "an immense multitude" in the Imperial city suffered for their faith in Christ.

Light is also thrown on the extent of the Christian conquest during the first century by what we now know about the kind of people who were being won. The ordinary idea is that progress was made mainly among the uneducated and the slave population; and it goes without saying that the Gospel must have been specially welcome among the masses of despairing men and women

who were wearing out their lives in bitterness and sorrow. But Sir William Ramsay, who has done so much to reconstruct the first century for us, and whose interest in this theme is as remarkable as his scholarship, says that at first Christianity spread more rapidly among the educated than among the uneducated. The German writer Schultze, too, says: "It was not the base elements which came into the Church, but, on the contrary, the better strata of the Roman population—the artificers, the shopkeepers, and the small landed proprietors; therefore preponderatingly the under and middle portion of the citizen class, who in the general moral and religious dissolution of heathenism still proved themselves the soundest classes in the community." Dean Merivale also has it that at first the Gospel was embraced by persons approaching to what we should call the middle classes in their condition, their education, and their moral views.

In the year 57, a lady of illustrious birth, Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, was tried before the Senate on the charge of being tainted with "foreign superstition"—that is, of being a Christian. In the reign of Domitian, too, we read that Flavius Clemens, the consul, and Domitilla his

wife (the husband being the Emperor's cousin and the wife his niece), were put on trial for "atheism" —that is, for being Christians. Well may Harnack say regarding this incident: "What a change! Between fifty and sixty years after Christianity reached Rome, a daughter of the Emperor (Vespasian) embraces the faith; and thirty years after the fearful persecutions of Nero, the presumptive heirs to the throne were brought up in a Christian home."

In addition to these illustrious converts, others not less renowned were at the same time accused of being Christians; among them being Glabrio, who had been consul with Trajan; and who died for his faith. He belonged to one of the wealthiest and most illustrious families in the State. The impression created by such Confessors is borne out by the incidental testimony of Scripture as to the kind of converts the first-century Missionaries won for their Lord. There were many from among the débris, many of the flotsam and jetsam, and the common people heard the Word gladly. But we hear also of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus; of Publius, the Roman ruler in Malta; and of the Asiarchs or chief rulers of Asia at Ephesus, as on the Saviour's side. In the same company of the redeemed we also meet men like Dionysius, a member

of the Council of Areopagus at Athens; Erastus, the public treasurer at Corinth; the centurion Cornelius, the physician Luke, and Crispus, the ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth.

Finally, we have the remarkable testimony, borne alike to the extent of the conquests of the Apostolic Era and to the character of the converts, which is to be found in the letter sent by the Roman Governor Pliny to the Emperor Trajan about the year 112. In this important State document, the perplexed Governor asks for directions as to how he was to deal with the Christians with whom he was constantly coming into contact. It sets forth that the Christian religion was professed by "many of all ages and ranks, and of both sexes"; that the "movement was not confined to the cities, but had spread into the villages and country"; that the temples of the old religions were "almost deserted"; that the sacred rites "were interrupted"; that the victims for sacrifice could find "very few purchasers"; and that all this had been going on for a long time. Pliny wrote from Bithynian Pontus, an extensive province in Asia Minor, and there is no reason for thinking that that province was in any way exceptional in regard to the extent to which it had been evangelised.

Beyond any question a great and glorious

work had been accomplished by the Missionaries of the Apostolic Era, known and unknown; accomplished in the face of difficulties and dangers which might have daunted the bravest, and in spite of the fact that Imperial Rome itself, that power which had swept everything else before it, had once and again set itself to crush out the new and obnoxious faith with all its might. But then, as now, the Gospel of the grace of God was mightier than the mightiest. Everything that the world counts mighty was hostile to the Christians; yet they overcame, because they were true to their Lord and to the spirit of His Gospel.

The outstanding characteristic of the era from the Missionary standpoint is that every believer was a Missionary. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word"; and they who were allowed to remain at home preached the Word too. They had, indeed, no choice. The whole social order was such that a Christian could only remain a secret disciple by denying his Lord, and a disciple who does that is no disciple at all. Necessity was laid on them; they had to let their light shine; and it was inevitable that they who knew them should be convinced that they had been with God. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

CHAPTER III

TILL THE EMPIRE WAS WON

"They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you."—LUKE 21. 12.

"He who would destroy evil must build up good in its place, otherwise he is no architect of God."—BOEHME.

"Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong."

WHITTIER.

CHAPTER III

TILL THE EMPIRE WAS WON

A PERIOD of almost exactly two centuries elapsed from the year 112, when Pliny's letter to Trajan threw a flood of light on the Church as it emerged from the Apostolic Era, and the year 313, when Constantine's Edict of Milan told that the long-drawn battle between the Empire and the Church was at an end, and that the Galilean had conquered.

In dealing with these centuries from the Missionary view-point, covering as they do what are called the sub-apostolic and the post-apostolic eras, it is impossible not to be conscious of a certain fall in the temperature as we proceed, even although it is a journey to victory. As we pass from the fellowship of the New Testament saints to meet even those who were nearest the Apostles, we seem to have left much of the sunshine behind, and to have entered a region encompassed with clouds. Yet this change may be more apparent than real.

There was still much sunshine, if only we had an inspired record of it; while even in the time of the Apostles there were many clouds, as the unbiased story so clearly shows.

Great as the superiority of the New Testament writers is to the sub-apostolic fathers and the apologists who followed them, it is a blunder to imagine that everything was ideal even when the Church was still guided by inspired leaders; and it is difficult to understand how those who have the New Testament in their hands can think of the golden age of the Christian Church as in that far-distant past. Beyond any question, the best is yet to be; and the crowning day is coming. It may even be near at hand. Yet it is true that the temperature gradually fell as the Apostolic Era receded into the past. The mystery of iniquity, of whose empire St. Paul had such sad forebodings even in his time, soon manifested its power, and the blight of the priest, so strikingly absent in New Testament times, soon fell on the young Missionary Church. Paganism began to avenge itself for many a defeat by creeping into doctrine and practice alike, especially along sacerdotal lines. Christ had bruised its head; but it bruised His heel, until ultimately it had converted the evangelist pastor into a sacrificing priest, the sacrament of the Supper into a sacrifice, and the

communion table into an altar. Long before the Empire was won, the cloven hoof of priestly hankering after domination had begun to show itself, with disastrous results, for there is no canker or dry rot so deadly; and just in proportion as that subtle and evil change took place, the Missionary spirit of the Church was perverted or disappeared.

These passing years, too, saw the gradual disappearance of the miraculous gifts which the Church had formerly enjoyed. She exchanged power with God for power with men. It may be, indeed, that these gifts were granted only for the era in which the ship Ecclesia was being launched, and were as the manna which ceased when there was the corn of the land; but it is by no means certain that the ministry of healing would not have persisted along with the ministry of preaching, had the Church remained loyal to her first love, and allowed nothing whatever to come in between her and her Lord.

When at length, in the year 313, the official authorities of the Empire recognised the much-suffering Church, and she passed from the trial by persecution to the far more dangerous trial by prosperity, it has been calculated that at least one-twentieth of the entire population of the Empire had become Christian. That means that out of

a population estimated to have been about one hundred and twenty millions, there were six millions of Christians. That was Gibbon's estimate, and most have adopted it as fairly accurate. At best, however, it is only a guess, alike as to the population of the Empire and the proportion which had been won for Christ; and recent investigation has thrown such light on what the Gospel really achieved during these centuries, that the tendency now among those who speak with authority is to claim a much larger proportion for Christianity than was allowed by Gibbon.

Some who have much to say for their contention hold that in Constantine's day a tenth of the people rather than a twentieth were on Christ's side. Some scholars even say that there is warrant for claiming as many as a fifth—that is, four times as many as have been usually claimed. But even on the lowest estimate, we have a record of marvellous progress, especially when we bear in mind the extraordinary ferocity of the persecutions through which the Church had passed. It may be true that the blood of the martyrs has often been the seed of the Church, but there were exceptions to the rule where the persecutors were sufficiently determined; and it has to be borne in mind that these terrible persecutions were just at an end when the recognition came, and that the seed so liberally sown and

watered had had little time in which to bring forth its Divine fruit.

In the interests of the work which has still to be done, our business now is to discover as best we can how such progress was made in circumstances so adverse ; and how the Church passed at once from persecution to fashion and favour, and the mighty forces of paganism were forced at last to cry out that Christ had conquered in the strife. There are other lines of investigation connected with this formative era as the Empire was won for our Lord which might be followed with profit. In particular there is the haunting question, which will not be ignored, as to how the progressive perversion and degradation of the Church can be reconciled either with such a splendid triumph, or with the promise of Christ that He would be with her to the end and that the Holy Spirit would abide with her for ever. But the Missionary problem is all that can be faced here.

During this period of stress and strain the Church had increasingly to face error from within, as well as heathenism from without. She had to do battle with Gnosticism, a subtle foe which appeared in many a guise. It would have turned the Gospel of God's grace, which is for all mankind, into a philosophy which at best could only have been for the cultured few. She had

also to face Ebionism, which was in reality a phase of the protean opposition that St. Paul had to combat all his days. It sought to degrade the universal religion of the Cross into a sort of Jewish sect, and held that in order to be true Christians men must also be Jews.

During this period the militant Church, just beginning to find her feet among men, had also to turn aside at many times and in many places from her aggressive work, to deal with strifes within her own borders. There was the dispute as to the right day on which to keep Easter, a dispute which never seems less fundamental than when our eyes are on the regions beyond. If only men were to cultivate the far-off vision which strains after those who are still without, they would acquire more of the grace of proportion. Then there was the strife over those who were called the Montanists, a sect which had this merit, at least, that they led to increased attention being given to the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit—a theme which has never received the consideration it deserves, and which has been bestowed on the kindred theme, the Person and Work of our Lord.

We depend for our information about these sectaries, if sectaries they were, on their professed and bitter opponents; and, personally, I have

always a liking for heretics whose error grows out of excess of zeal. Our troubles have seldom come along that line; and, deadly as fanaticism is, what has been called fanaticism has often only been misguided enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is too rare to be needlessly driven out. In addition to these, there was the strife over what has been variously described as Sabellianism, Patripassianism, and Monarchianism. This heresy arose out of a genuine desire to vindicate the mysteries of the Christian faith. Those who fell into it, however, dealt with the distinctions between the Three Persons in the Trinity and the Two Natures of our Lord in such a way as really to explain away what they sought to elucidate. And so it was that from the middle of the second century the Church, which had to contend with so many foes from without, had also to do battle with dangerous tendencies from within; and the need was increasingly felt for the defence of the faith against popular, literary, and philosophic attacks from many standpoints. Ere long the great race of Apologists arose in response to the demand.

We have only to deal with these doctrinal discussions in so far as they bore on the work of evangelisation which we are seeking to trace; but in an important sense they formed part of the aggressive work to which believers were then called,

as they obeyed the marching orders of their risen Lord. Many of the Apologists were devoted preachers and Missionaries, and there were classes in the Empire who could only be won along such argumentative lines as they pursued. It is impossible not to be filled with admiration for the combined wisdom and courage with which the many-sided attack on heathenism was made.

Following the example of St. Paul, the Church set herself to seize and occupy the great vantage points all over the Empire, in such centres as Corinth, Antioch, and Ephesus. When the modern Mission movement began, more than a century ago, brave men and women were content to bury themselves in obscure places of the earth, and to go out into veritable wildernesses after the wandering and lost. But, with all its heroism and self-abnegation, that method was probably a mistaken one; certainly it was not the method by which the Apostles triumphed and the Empire was won. The Christian Missionaries in the post-apostolic era struck boldly at the main centres of wealth and trade; and measured their strength with paganism at its best and its worst, in its mightiest strongholds. They followed the great trunk-lines of Imperial intercommunication, and the farthest-reaching victories of the new faith were won in the

very places where the influence of Greek and Roman civilisations had been most felt. It was in cities like Rome and Corinth, Antioch and Alexandria, Carthage and Lyons, the strategic centres of government and commerce, and where the conflict was keenest and intellectual life most acute, that the Christian Church early attained her greatest influence and numbers.

The rate of progress varied, of course, in different parts of the Mission field, and the tide sometimes ebbed as well as flowed. But by the end of the second century even the fragmentary documents which have come down to us make us feel that we are in presence of a system long and firmly established. Every congregation was still an outpost, and necessarily and inevitably a Missionary centre; but it is everywhere manifest that the initial stage was long since past. Even thus early, according to Keim, the Christian population numbered probably a sixth of the whole population of the Empire, and the Good News had spread far. In North Africa, for example, probably a tenth of the people were already Christian, and here as elsewhere the proportion was greatest in the cities. It was where life was keenest and men were most intelligent that the truth prevailed most, and at a Council held at Carthage in the year 225 there were present no fewer than seventy bishops or

representative pastors from North Africa and Numidia.

Throughout the two centuries now under review, the Christians were practically under sentence of death; and it depended on the temper or the character of the Emperor or his subordinates how far that sentence was carried into effect or kept in suspense. Their religion was illegal, a *religio illicita*, and they themselves were outlaws. Thus it was that sometimes there was persecution in one part of the Empire while there was peace in another. Sometimes, too, there were years of quietness, and then suddenly the sky was darkened, and the storm broke over the faithful, and swept many of them away. And, strangely enough from one view-point, as we have seen, it was often the best emperors who were the keenest persecutors. It was their patriotism which made them hostile to the only rival they dreaded.

Hence the fact, which has puzzled not a few, that some of those who have survived as monsters of cruelty and infamy in ecclesiastical annals and traditions have come down in the ordinary histories as great statesmen and thinkers. But a little reflection soon shows how this is so. We have only to think of St. Paul in his unconverted and persecuting days, to understand how the very loyalty of the good emperors to the laws and

ideals of the Empire, as they understood them, might rouse them to the most determined efforts to crush out the new religion which seemed to them to be disintegrating the Empire and setting itself to destroy everything for which the Empire stood.

As for the facts, there is no room for doubt. Marcus Aurelius, for example, who reigned from 161 till 180, was a wise and patriotic ruler, whose wise maxims and reflections are valued by thinkers yet. But history records that it was in his reign that Christians were first systematically persecuted, and a determined effort was made to eradicate the Gospel and its disciples by sheer extermination. The Emperor regarded the Gospel as one of the evil superstitions which were sapping the life-blood of the Empire and undermining the old Roman strength and virtue. During his reign the Christians suffered terribly, alike from the fury of the populace and the action of the Government. Again and again the mob rose against them, as responsible for the terrible calamities from which the Empire was suffering. For there was not only constant warfare, there were floods and earthquake, famine and pestilence. There was a plague in the year 166, from the destructive effects of which, according to Niebuhr, the Empire never recovered; and for all these ills the blame was laid on the Christians and their alleged impiety.

The same phenomenon may also be seen in connection with the work of Decius, who reigned from 249 till 251. Once again the Empire had fallen on evil days, and the Emperor was bent on bringing back the virtue and order of former times, and on restoring the unity and vigour of the ages which were gone; and he also set himself to achieve nothing short of the extermination of the Christians. He did not, of course, know what Christianity really was. He was an old Roman, in his faults as well as in his virtues; but he believed that the Gospel was the enemy of Rome, and he saw clearly that the persecution waged heretofore had neither greatly diminished the power of the ominous religion nor prevented its growth. Hence his determination to destroy the Christians everywhere, root and branch. These were ordered to appear before the magistrates, and there abjure their faith in Christ and offer sacrifices to the gods of Rome; and the persecution which ensued was so systematic and ruthless that many yielded to the Decian terror. Fortunately, however, it was very short-lived, and the Church breathed freely once again.

An illustration of the same phenomenon, but from the other side, is to be seen in the career of Commodus, who succeeded Marcus Aurelius and was the unworthy son of a great father. In his

time the churches had comparative rest; not because he had the slightest sympathy with the Gospel, but because he was not enough either of a man or a patriot to care for the interests of the Empire or for the perpetuation of the old Roman principles and virtues.

During the greater part of the second century—till the year 180, that is—there were four great emperors: Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius; and when the last of these passed away, there is reason for believing that, in spite of all opposition and persecution, the Gospel had obtained a hold on every province throughout the vast Empire of Rome. It had also spread in its Missionary career over a considerable part of the Parthian Empire, and into the remote regions of the Far East. It had likewise been carried across the frontiers of the Empire among the barbarian tribes of Western and Northern Europe. As early as the year 170, a Christian prince, Abgar Bar Manu by name, ruled in Edessa, the capital of a small province in Mesopotamia, and his coinage was the first to bear the sign of the Cross.

After the four great emperors there was a period of unrest, which lasted for more than a century, and which saw no fewer than twenty-six emperors, only one of whom died a natural death. These political troubles of the Empire were on the whole

favourable to the growth of the Church, inasmuch as the frequent changes rendered any settled policy antagonistic to it impossible, and most of the rulers who flitted across the scene were too much taken up with their struggle for existence to interfere with it. Yet even during these years of tumult there was many a sporadic attempt to suppress the truth. But whether on a larger or a smaller scale, these attempts were equally vain; and during the last forty years of this time of upheaval rapid progress was everywhere made by the Missionaries of Christ. "Who can describe," asks Eusebius, "those vast collections of men that flocked to the religion of Christ; and those multitudes crowding in from every city, and the illustrious concourses in the houses of worship?"

This period of unrest in the State and progress in the Church came to an end with the accession of Diocletian, another great emperor who was also a notable persecutor, and who is far better known now as persecutor than as statesman. The Church, however, had become too strong to be seriously shaken, even by such a foe as Diocletian; and after eight more years of direst suffering, she emerged as conqueror, and was on the eve of Imperial recognition when Diocletian died. Again the anvil had worn out the hammer. "During these years of woe," says Schaff, "there was no alternative but

apostacy or starvation"; for one device was to sprinkle all the food in the markets with sacrificial wine, so that the Christians could not use it. Ingenuity was exhausted to find out new means of torture and disgrace for the faithful, and many apostatised. The great majority, however, stood firm, and the crowning day was near.

Already in the year 261 the Emperor Gallienus had acknowledged Christianity as a *religio licita*, an allowed religion, although that recognition was soon withdrawn. From his deathbed, in 311, the Emperor Galerius admitted that persecution had failed, and actually besought the prayers of the Christians. Then, in 312, Licinius issued decrees in favour of the Christians; and finally, on 28th October of the same year, the epoch-making battle of Milvian Bridge was won by Constantine—fighting, as he claimed, under Divine guidance, with a banner with the cross on it and the legend *in hoc vince*, against an enemy who had put himself under the protection of the old gods of Rome.

After this victory, Constantine at once issued a decree in favour of Christianity, and in 313 the famous Decree of Milan appeared. It spoke "in the name of the Deity whose seat is in heaven," and granted "both to the Christians and to all a free power of following the religion which each

willed to choose." And so that phase of the great world-conflict between Christ and Antichrist came to an end, and the Empire was officially won. The enemy had failed signally where frontal attacks were involved, and now he set himself to endeavour to destroy the Gospel by more subtle devices; but the open conflict was over for ever.

Throughout this long period of conflict and conquest it may be claimed generally that still, as in the Apostolic Era, every Christian was a Missionary; and every Christian community, even if it were only a family or two, was an outpost in the war. The conditions of life everywhere—social, domestic, and political alike—were such that believers were forced to be a separate people, and as such were mighty for good wherever they were. The salt had nowise lost its savour. The progress of the Gospel meant the victory of goodness and purity, and of the service of God through the service of man. The whole round circle of life in the Empire involved constant recognition of the idolatry on which everything was founded; and thus it was impossible for Christians to share in it, and equally impossible for them to conceal their faith in Christ. Whenever persecution broke out, either on the smaller scale or the greater, it was easy to discover those who served the only living and true God. Thus believers were letting their

light shine; and such was the surrounding darkness, that it accentuated their light even as the midnight brings out the stars.

That interesting little book, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which was discovered, in 1875, in the library at Constantinople by Bryennios, tells of travelling evangelists who were supported by the churches and went everywhere preaching the Gospel. It is also true that it indicates that already, in the generation immediately succeeding the Apostles, precautions had to be taken against some who are called "Christ-traffickers"—those who made merchandise of Christ. But such an abuse could not have arisen so soon unless there had been a very widespread system of itineracy. There were, of course, permanent office-bearers in the Church who did not itinerate, and the organisation of the local communities grew rapidly as new needs arose. Yet it is manifest that a high importance attached to those who went from place to place.

The feature, however, which calls for strongest emphasis, as bearing on the problem of all the ages, is that the Church of that era was Missionary not so much because she supported Missionaries, or preachers, but because at every point all who named the name of Christ set themselves, and had to set themselves, to win the heathen for their

Lord. The entire army was mobilised for service. The whole army was kept on a war footing. Not only was every believer a Missionary, and necessarily so; all the unconverted were in heathenism. And even yet, while there are forms of work in which only a minority can share, and where those who would help must do so by deputy, there is Mission work in which every believer can take a part. Indeed, it is not too much to say that those who do nothing directly are doing nothing indirectly in any adequate sense, no matter how much time or money they may spend on the foreign field. A Missionary Church must still mean a Church composed of Missionaries.

Probably the best way, therefore, to set forth the character of the Church's service during the two centuries which elapsed from the time of Pliny's Letter until the appearance of the Edict of Milan, is to see a little of some of the more prominent workers whose names have survived. As in the earlier era, so also in this, the vast majority of the brave and consecrated souls who lived and died for Christ and won the Empire for Him are buried in oblivion, so far as history is concerned; although their names are all written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and their record is luminous in the light of the eternal. But there are names here and there which are known to us

and whose heroic service is on record, and through what we know of them it is possible to form some conception of what they and others like them were doing, and of the sort of Missionaries they were. There are four of these heroes of whom enough is known to give us an idea of the nature of their work—Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen.

There are but few who have never heard of Polycarp's reply to the Roman proconsul who urged him to save his life by denying his Lord. "Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then shall I curse my King and Saviour?" Recent investigation has put the date of his martyrdom at Smyrna as far back as the year 155; and if he were eighty-six years old then, he must have been a grown man before St. John passed to his rest. Indeed, Irenæus, his pupil, expressly states that he had not only listened to the teachings of the venerable Apostle, but had conversed with many who had seen the Lord in the flesh. The extreme importance of this fact in connection with the authorship of the Gospel according to St. John has often been pointed out.

The only one of the writings of Polycarp which has survived is a short Epistle to the Philippians, in which he appeals frequently to the memory of

the Apostles as one who had known them at first hand, and which gives ample evidence of the maturity of his Christian life. He sets himself to redress some of the abuses which had crept into the church at Philippi, especially in connection with the love of money, which had led to grave disorders. He is particularly emphatic in his denunciation of heresy, which was already a serious factor in the situation. His long life in one way and another was spent in seeking to win the heathen for Christ; and after living for his Lord, he died for Him, spurning every temptation to escape by recantation or denial.

As his name testifies, Justin Martyr, like so many of his contemporaries, was honoured by being called to give up his life for his Saviour. He died at Rome, probably about the year 165, or ten years later than Polycarp. He had been a student of philosophy before his conversion, and had in vain sought satisfaction for his spiritual yearnings in the various schools of ancient thought. About the year 131 he met a venerable stranger on the seashore, probably somewhere in Palestine, and through him he was led to find in Christ the satisfaction for heart and intellect alike which he had been unable to find anywhere else. As has so often been the case in Mission work, it was an obscure worker who thus gave Justin to the Church

and to us. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

The lowliest worker may win some great standard-bearer for the truth. Justin was an eager, warm-hearted man, full of courage; and just as he had hungered and thirsted for the light before he knew the Lord, so after he had found the great Light he was eager to carry it everywhere to those who were still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; and he became a Missionary along the lines of his philosophical experience and equipment. He put all his gifts and training at the service of Christ, and two elaborate Apologies or vindications have come down to us from his pen, as well as a treatise written to win and convince the Jews. Dating as they do from about the middle of the second century, these works are of very great value, especially as historical documents.

The splendid testimony which he bears in his first Apology to the moral triumphs of the Gospel may be quoted as typical of the bold line which the apologists of those days usually adopted. "We who once delighted in adultery," he writes, "are now become chaste; once given to magic, now we are consecrated to the One Good God; once loving wealth above all things, we now hold all our goods in common and share them with the

poor; once full of hatred and slaughter, now we live together in peace, and pray for our enemies and strive to convert our persecutors." What Gibbon called his "splendid exaggeration" may also be quoted as typical of the aggressive spirit of those early evangelists. "For there is not one single race of men," he says, "whether barbarians or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads or vagrants or herdsmen dwelling in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the Crucified Jesus."

The conquest of the world for Christ through sheer devotion and goodness born of His Spirit was proceeding apace, and the Church was not yet "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." When Justin was before the Roman tribunal on trial for his life, he was asked to define his Christian philosophy, and gladly availed himself of the opportunity to tell in forceful words of his faith in the God of heaven and earth, through Whom he had found peace and rest after long and weary quest. The judge, with ill-timed raillery, asked him whether he thought he would ascend into heaven when his head was cut off. "I know it," he replied to the interruption. "Yes, beyond all power to doubt I know it." When he was urged to save his life by offering sacrifice to the gods, he said: "Our great desire is to suffer for Christ;

for that will give us confidence before His awful judgment-seat, at the bar of which the whole world will have to stand." Sentence of death was then pronounced, and was carried out the same day. Taking him all in all, Justin is one of the most interesting workers of his age; and his Missionary labours were all transfused with a glow which came straight from his ardent, eager soul.

Tertullian, for ever famous as a defender and exponent of the Christian faith, is the outstanding representative of the North African Church. He was born at Carthage, not later than the year 160, and became a Christian when he was about thirty-two years of age. He was a highly educated man, and his extant writings show him to have been a keen debater, witty, sarcastic, and intense, the most human of all the Fathers. "Let the Tiber overflow its banks," he says in one passage, "let the Nile fail to inundate the country, let the heavens be of brass, let the sun be darkened, let famine or pestilence visit the land, and at once the cry is raised, 'The Christians to the lions.'" His great claim, too, is of interest yet to every student of Missionary enterprise. "We are a people of yesterday; and yet we have filled every place belonging to you — cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camps, your tribes,

companies, palaces, senate, forum! We leave you your temples only. We count your armies; our number in a single province will be greater."

In this also we have the buoyancy of youth. This was what could be proclaimed at the beginning of the third century, when the work of world-evangelisation was hardly begun. Tertullian's vehemence and asceticism led him to join the Montanists, a step he took some time between 199 and 203. These sectaries, who have probably got scant justice from the orthodox historians, even as they got scant justice from the orthodox Church of the time, were loyal to all the great verities of the faith, and differed from the main body of believers along three lines, which are full of interest as showing some of the tendencies striving for expression in those stirring times. They rejected the current doctrines regarding the government of the Church; they were inclined to asceticism, perhaps even to fanaticism; and they attached so much importance to the revelations of their prophet-preachers as to interfere with the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. It is not easy, however, to say how far they were actually in the wrong, and how far they were driven to extremes by their opponents; and it is not at all unlikely that they represent an exaggerated opposition to the worldly tendencies

which were already manifesting themselves in the Church.

The fact that Tertullian associated himself with them would seem to support this view, and it is not our part to pass any sweeping condemnation. It may be easier to place them, both in their weakness and their strength, when we find that they claimed for themselves the title "the spiritual," and described the ordinary Christians as "the carnal." As for Tertullian himself, although he shared to the full in the persecution of the time, he does not seem to have been called on to seal his testimony with his blood. The glory of his work is that everything centres round the great doctrines of sin and grace, and probably no one in all that early Church had an influence equal to his. Even yet his pages glow with enthusiasm and quiver with passion. His writings embody his whole soul, and never did a writer more fully infuse his entire moral life into what he wrote.

If Tertullian be the greatest of the Latin Fathers, Origen is the greatest of the Greek Fathers. He was born in Alexandria about the year 185. His father was a Christian of some standing, and he received a liberal education, being so thoroughly trained in Scripture that he early knew many portions by heart. In harmony with

such a good beginning, his best-known work is his *Hexapla*, or six-version edition of the Hebrew Scriptures, which was the greatest work of its kind until twelve centuries later Erasmus gave the Church the Greek text of the New Testament. Origen's father died as a martyr in the year 202, and as one result the son found himself utterly destitute at the age of seventeen. Till he was past middle life, his home was in Alexandria, where he did splendid service as a teacher. In this work he was successful in winning many of his heathen pupils for Christ, a fact which emphasises the truth that the Church was then Missionary at every pore and in every sphere. He had also a reputation for bringing those who had wandered into heresy back to the orthodox fold; one of those whom he thus rescued from error, a wealthy man named Ambrosius, who had been a Gnostic, putting a costly library at his disposal for the good work, along with seven shorthand writers and a number of copyists.

In various cases where trouble had arisen, Origen was sent or invited to visit churches in their distress, and was able to heal their divisions. As a preacher, too, he went to Cæsarea, where in later life he found refuge from his adversaries. About the year 218 he was summoned by the mother of Alexander Severus, afterwards Emperor,

to instruct her in the faith of Christ. He was a great Missionary teacher and preacher, and his reputation as a writer was such that they used to say he had written six thousand books. Broken by suffering, he died in the year 254, one of his favourite sayings in his passing being : "Love is an agony, a passion." To love the truth so as to suffer for it ; to love all mankind with a yearning to bring them to Christ ; to love if need be to the death—that was the creed and the character of Origen.

It was through workers such as these, known and unknown, that the Empire was won for Christ. The Missionaries were of all sorts, of all ranks and classes—slaves and patricians, humble girls and famous scholars, statesmen and rude labourers. And it was a wonderful work they did for humanity and God. Through their influence, all the relationships of life were softened and sweetened. The old paternal severity was transformed, the relation of husband and wife was purified, children were educated, labour was dignified, and the slave sat beside his master at the Table of the Lord. Liberty was born in that early Church ; middle walls of partition were broken down ; the power of the new spirit was everywhere felt. And so the tide rose higher and higher until the Edict of Milan became a moral and spiritual necessity.

There are obvious limits to the power of an oppressor, even when he is an absolute autocrat; and when the Gospel lays hold of the common people, the persecutor is baffled. The poppy-heads may be struck off, but not the blades of grass when once they have spread all over the plain. If only the Empire had stopped short with recognition, all might have been well. That is all the Church of the living God should ever seek, whether it be in China or Britain—a fair field and no favour. The State should be Christian, just like the Church, a holy institution of God. But when the State takes the Church under her wing and patronises her, she does more harm than good; and it is open to question whether even yet the Church has recovered from the hurt she received when the favour of the Emperor led multitudes to crowd into her courts, converted by Imperial Edict and not by the grace of Christ. Certain it is that under the new auspices, and in the sunshine of the Imperial favour, the mystery of iniquity, of which St. Paul had such sad forebodings, developed apace, until the tyranny of the priest took the place of that of the pagan oppressor, and the sacerdotal spirit led to many features of paganism being incorporated into the doctrines and practices of the Church.

And thus, on the very morning of victory,

the whole problem became complicated and the whole situation became perplexing after a new sort. "As soon as ever Christianity is cast into the world to begin its history," says Mozley in his *University Sermons*, "that moment there begins the great deception." "There are to be false Christs and false prophets, false signs and wonders; so that it is the parting admonition of Christ to His disciples, 'Take heed lest any man deceive you,' as if that would be the great danger." The explanation of this "mass of deception," according to the preacher, lies in the solemn power of Christianity "not only to bring out the truth of human nature, but, like some wonderful alchemy, to elicit and extract the falsehood of it; not only to develop what is sincere and sterling in man, but what is counterfeit in him too." And so there are warnings as well as inspiration for the great Missionary enterprise from this marvellous era of tribulation and triumph.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIÆVAL MISSIONS

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."—Rom. 10. 12.

"Nothing is destroyed until it is replaced."—Comte.

"I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them."—Ruskin.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIÆVAL MISSIONS

ALTHOUGH the period from the Edict of Milan, with its Imperial recognition of Christianity, till the Reformation in the sixteenth century is a long one, it may be traversed swiftly so far as Missions are concerned. It is true that these centuries, sometimes so silent, and these ages, sometimes so dark, raise many problems in connection with Missions, but for the most part it is enough to state these and carry them forward.

In this era Christianity spread over the whole of Europe, with the exception of the far North. On the other hand, and sadly enough during this era, too, the mystery of iniquity—which had begun to manifest itself at an earlier stage, mainly in the form of sacerdotalism, and had been so strongly reinforced by Imperial favour—actually obtained the mastery within the Church. Not only so, but during this mediæval era flourishing churches like that of North Africa, the church of Tertullian,

decayed and disappeared, owing mainly, as some think, to the fact that they had ceased to be Missionary churches. It is of the very nature of the case that a Missionary church alone can be healthy and progressive, and it is also of the nature of the case that churches which are not progressive must be retrograde.

So completely did the blight of paganism fall on the life and doctrine of the Church, that on the eve of the Reformation the official head of Christendom, Pope Leo x., could describe the Gospel as having been a profitable fable for him and his. The Reformation was a return to New Testament simplicities and purities, a great movement back to Christ. It was the resurrection of the Church from the grave of pagan corruption, a revival of heart-religion.

As has been already indicated, Christianity suffered the most deadly injury when the sunshine of public and unwonted favour brought many into her membership who had been converted by the Imperial Edict and not by the power of Divine truth. Men and women crowded into her ranks who brought with them their heathen philosophies and their love of pagan ceremonial, corrupting the simplicity of the Gospel alike in faith and worship; so that to this day every branch of the Church suffers from the insidious invasion. So

true is it that the paganism which had been conquered proved deadlier than the paganism which had power to persecute and kill. *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*—the conquered gave laws to the conquerors.

Historians have sometimes dated the final disappearance of paganism as having taken place in the fifth century, but it is certain that it has not disappeared yet. Such phenomena as the immoralities of the Europe of the Rennaissance, the rationalism, moderatism, and Socinianism of the Europe of the eighteenth century, and the materialism and indifference to revealed religion of the Europe of to-day, are due not so much to periodic backsliding as to the periodic recrudescence of the paganism which has never yet been quite destroyed, and which has its perennial ally in the unregenerate human heart with its hatred of the supernatural.

Our business now, however, is to see how the truth as it is in Jesus spread all over the Empire and beyond it, among the barbarians subsequent to the conversion of Constantine. Inroads had already been made on the territories which lay outside the Empire and beyond the bounds of civilisation. Tertullian could boast that regions which were inaccessible to the armies of Rome had been brought into subjection to Christ. Before

the close of the third century, Christian captives had carried the Gospel among the Goths, and at the Council of Nicæa in 325 there was a representative of the Goths present. Yet it is quite correct to put it that in the time of Constantine the work which lay before the Church, the Missionary work of the Middle Ages, was to win for Christ the lands which lay outside the Empire, or were too far from the centre for effective rule. Nor was the work any the easier that many of those who had thus to be evangelised were migratory tribes. It was an important feature of the work, too, that now it had often to be done among peoples who were wholly barbarous, and no longer among those who were as truly civilised as the Missionaries themselves. The extent to which this was accomplished may be estimated in part by the respect for the Church shown by many of the barbarians who ere long swept down on the Empire.

One other noteworthy feature of the mediæval Mission work of the Church was that those who did it were not unwilling at times to use the arm of flesh which was now sometimes at their disposal. That was one of the by-products of the Imperial recognition and the new Erastianism, and it was no more helpful to true spiritual work than the recourse of some Romanist Missionaries to the moral support of gunboats has been helpful in our time.

By the thirteenth or fourteenth century Missionary effort had practically ceased. Europe as a whole was by that time nominally Christian; the New World was not yet opened up, and the great Eastern empires were closed against the truth. But even up to that point the story is far from being one of uninterrupted progress; for Mohammedanism had long since devastated what had been Christian territories in Northern Africa, and the lands which had witnessed the early triumphs of the Missionaries of Christ. It has been remarked that although the Church very early gave a place in her public devotions to prayers for the conversion of the heathen, there was no actual organisation for that end. That was probably due to the fact that for long the whole Church was such an organisation, and that, strictly speaking, there should be no other. Yet as the Church became world-wide, the absence of some such definite organisation may have hastened the cessation of overt efforts to win the heathen for the Lord. Forms and organisations have their drawbacks, but they have this advantage, that even if sometimes, when the tide of spiritual life has receded, they may be little more than forms, when the tide rises again they are there to be reinfused with the spirit of power: and historically that has often meant much.

To enter fully into the history of mediæval Missions, fragmentary as it often is, would mean following the career of men like Ulphilas, the Apostle of the Goths, who was a boy of seven when the Council of Nicæa met; Valentinus and Severinus, who evangelised the tribes of the Upper Danube; Martin of Tours, who wrought among the Franks; Augustine, who was sent to the men of Kent; Aidan, who was the Missionary of the Northumbrian Saxons; Gallus, who preached in Switzerland; Killian, who spread the light in Thuringia; Virgilius, who penetrated into the darkness of Carinthia; and Columbanus, who told the Burgundians of the Vosges of the grace of God. Many such names still survive, sometimes as nothing more than names, to remind us of the multitudes who braved every danger that they might hand on the light which had illumined their own souls, and share with the weary and heavy-laden the joy which had come into their own lives. But we must divide if we are to conquer, and from one sphere we may learn all that is essential in the rest.

We shall therefore take what was done in Scotland as typical of what was going on all over the outlying regions of Europe. We shall trace with some detail the work of the early Missionaries who came into that little grey Northern land and made

it, by the grace of God, not only the mother of many stalwart men and gracious women, but the mother of many of the best Missionaries who have ever adventured out into the regions beyond.

All over Scotland there are place-names such as Kilbride, Kilmarnock, Kilkerran, Kilwinning, Kilninian, Kilconquhar, Kilpatrick, Kilmary, and many another, which serve to remind the generations following of what St. Bride, St. Marnock, St. Patrick, and other Missionaries did in the olden time when a man could only live through his work. In some instances these and similar landmarks are so widespread as to show that the influence of the evangelists in question was not confined to any one district or tribe. St. Bruic, for example, who survives in Bute, survives also in Brittany. All over the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, too, there are places called Kildonnan, in memory of St. Donnan, who is said to have been martyred at Eigg, a small island North of Iona, in the year 617. Not only so, but there is a Kildonnan in Wigtonshire in the South, another in Ayrshire in the West, and yet another relic in Auchterless in Aberdeenshire, where there is a cattle market held annually called Donnan Fair.

Another of these early itinerant evangelists has his memory preserved in this singular roll-call of the saints in a little island off the shore of South

Knapdale in Argyleshire, called Eilan Moir Vic O'Chormoig—that is, the island of the great Cormac. In the small island of Bute alone there are traces of the blessed and fruitful work of at least seven of these old-world workers for God—Marnock, Chattan, Blain, Ninian, Michael, Bruic, and Bride or Bridget.

As interesting a case as any is one only recently authenticated. All through Argyleshire there are scattered sites or remains of ecclesiastical buildings coming under names with a generic similarity, such as Kilmary, Kilmory, Kilmorich, Kilmora, and Kilmoray. In Ross-shire, too, there is the beautiful mountain lake, Loch Maree; one of its islands, called Eilan Maree, has many ecclesiastical traditions clustering round it. For long it was thought that these were reminiscences of the worship of the Virgin Mary in the early Scottish Church; but it is known now that they commemorate the work of an itinerant Missionary, Maelrubha by name, whose memory is said to be perpetuated throughout the North and West of Scotland by no fewer than twenty-one place-names. Strangely enough, and as an instance of how the battle between error and truth came and went in these early days, the incursions of the pagan Danes undid the work of this saint so completely that, after the Revolution of 1688, the Presbytery of Dingwall

in Ross-shire had great difficulty in putting down the practice of offering yearly sacrifice to this same Maelrubha. The Christian Missionary had actually been transformed into a heathen deity, and was worshipped as such for generations after the Reformation.

In like fashion all over Scotland there are traces of the work of men like Cuthbert, Kenneth, Baithean, Aidan, and many another of the Scottish legion of honour. The story of St. Patrick affords an interesting glimpse and proof of how their good work had been going on from very early times. He seems to have been born on the banks of the Clyde about the year 397, at Bonavern, afterwards called Kilpatrick in memory of its greatest son. It was a Christian village in the midst of heathenism, and his father was a deacon in the church of the community; his pre-baptismal name showing further that he belonged to a native family. We cannot now tell whether these Christians had come to Strathclyde to make disciples, or whether, like so many other Missionaries, they had been driven into the wilds by persecution; but however they came, they had gathered others round them. England received the Gospel from Rome and the East. In due course she sent it North to Scotland, and then in turn Scotland sent Patrick to Ireland. Later on, when the former light had been quenched,

Ireland paid her debt with interest by giving Columba to Scotland. Thus the three countries were early bound together in a true union of hearts, and by the most precious and gracious ties of mutual indebtedness and mutual faith in the One Saviour and Lord.

There are three names which rise out of the obscurity of these early days in Scotland in such a fashion as to merit special consideration—Ninian, Kentigern, and Columba. Ninian was a century and a half before the other two, who were partly contemporaries. Speaking approximately, the three divide Scotland among them. Ninian is the saint of Galloway and the Southern Picts, although he seems to have penetrated as far North as Stirlingshire and Perthshire. Kentigern, or Mungo, as he is sometimes called, is the saint of Glasgow and the West of Scotland; while Columba did his main work among the Scots of the Western Isles and the Northern Picts, crossing the Grampians in his travels, and perhaps going as far North as the Orkney Islands.

St. Ninian, or, as the name sometimes appears, St. Rinian or Ringan, was born about the year 360. His birthplace is uncertain; but it is probable that he was of noble birth, and one of the old stock of the land. He is said to have made his way to Rome, which is not improbable;

although one of the weaknesses of the monkish annalists is to relate everything to Rome and Romish influence in the most uncritical fashion. On his return from the Continent, about the beginning of the fifth century, he landed in Galloway, and there built, with the help of masons he brought with him, what was the first stone church in Scotland. Because of its glittering appearance, this building was called the *candida casa*, or white house, which in Saxon was Hwitherne, or, as it is now, Whithorn, the centre from which Ninian's influence mostly radiated, and round which his fame mainly gathers. From his white house he wandered far and near on his errands of evangelisation, getting at least as far North as Perthshire.

The old Romans have left camps and walls to tell of their presence in the cold, stern regions of Caledonia. Ninian has left churches and wells and even villages to bear his name. There are no fewer than twenty-five Churches which have thus borne his name and perpetuated his work and worth throughout the districts in which he laboured. When he died, in 432, he left behind him a noble monument of his heroism and faith in the Picts whom he won for his Lord; and although his memory fades away into the shadowy past, his work endures and will endure for ever.

For ages after his death bands of pilgrims were wont to resort annually to his shrine at Whithorn, among those who went in 1474 being no less a lady than the wife of James III. In 1507, James IV. himself made the pilgrimage on foot that he might pray for the recovery of his wife, testify his resignation to the death of his two infant children, and express his penitence for his rebellion against his father. To this day, on the seashore about two miles from Whithorn, a cave is pointed out as the place where Ninian lodged, and it is now scheduled as a national monument.

During the eighty years which elapsed between the death of Ninian and the birth of Kentigern, two other names appear in the story of Scottish Missionary enterprise which deserve mention. The first is that of Palladius, whose memory survives at Fordoun in the Mearns, where there is not only Paldy's Well, but Paldy's Fair. The other is that of Servanus, or Serf, as he is more familiarly called. He appears to have been the head of a sort of Missionary institute from which trained evangelists went forth into the surrounding darkness to tell of the love of the Redeemer. He carried on his work first of all at Culross on the Forth, and then on an island in Loch Leven which still bears his name.

One day in the year 514, while the Mission

school was still at Culross, a small boat was driven ashore with one solitary, terror-stricken occupant, the daughter of a Pictish chief, who had broken the seventh commandment, and had been cast adrift for her offences to perish in the stormy waters of the North Sea. St. Serf received her in a kindly fashion, and by and by the son to whom she gave birth was baptized Kentigern, which means a chief lord.

The boy grew up in the community of the Missionaries, and Serf's pet name for him, Munghu, "My dear one," gave rise to Mungo, that other name by which he is now known. Along with the others there, he shared in the training of the school; and when his training was over he went out like the rest, with the love of Christ in his valiant young heart, to tell the story of salvation to others. He set his face towards the South, and settled by the banks of the river Clyde, with which his memory is so much bound up. When he was twenty-six years old, he had to flee from Strathclyde for a time, and betook himself to Wales, and there also his work is still commemorated. In 560, however, he was back again in his old quarters, bringing new workers and scholars with him; and for forty years he laboured there with much success, dying in the fulness of years in 601.

Those who are familiar with the Glasgow coat of arms will remember that it consists of a tree with a bird on it, a bell, and a salmon with a ring in its mouth. All these are connected with Kentigern's career, and afford a happy instance of how the legendary and the historical have been mixed up in the record of these early ages, and how needful it is to use many grains of salt when we deal with them. The bird has reference to an incident in the Missionary's school-days. One of his comrades had killed a robin redbreast, and had thrown the dead bird into his lap in order to incriminate him. But his innocence was marvellously displayed. The bird came to life again rather than that he should suffer unjustly, and from his shoulder it poured forth its song of praise and vindication. The tree has a double reference. By itself it tells of another miracle, when one frosty night the saint was saved from perishing of cold through fire being breathed into a frozen tree. But taken along with the bell, it tells of his calling the people to the worship of the true God by means of a bell swung on a tree in a clearing in the primæval Caledonian woods. The fish with the ring in its mouth tells of a time when a ring was imperatively required to vindicate injured innocence, and was miraculously found in a salmon which he drew from the Clyde.

This halo of the miraculous is not the only indication that already the superstitions of Rome were beginning to rival the superstitions of the heathen. Even if we distinguish between the evangelists and their biographers, who represent a later age, we can see how the mystery of iniquity was at work even in the far-off Mission field, and among those who were at the very front and right in the firing line. The asceticism which Kentigern is said to have practised is but one out of many proofs of this. His bed, we are told, was a hollow stone, and at the second cock-crowing he rose to plunge himself into the cold, rapid stream in summer and winter alike—there to recite from the Book of Psalms. No wonder he had power over the savages accustomed to yield to every appetite and impulse; but it was not the highest kind of power, inasmuch as it was not purely spiritual, and such practices had in them the elements of decay. Asceticism, however impressive it may be, is not Christianity. The service of the Lord Jesus is not emaciation, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

St. Columba, the third of the three mighty men, was born in Ireland in the wilds of Donegal in the year 521. The royalty of two lines united in him; and had his ambitions been worldly, he

might have made his way to a throne. His mother, however, was a godly woman, and early imbued her child with a love for Scripture which he never lost. He soon gave indications of the strength of character and the thirst for purity which distinguished him in later years. From the first he devoted himself to Missionary enterprise, and attended the great schools at Moville, Clonmel, and Glasnevin, which even at that early period flourished in the Isle of the Saints. He not only studied theology there, but music as well; and it is not unlikely that his powers as a bard, poet, and singer in one had more to do with his magnetic influence in later years than even his preaching had.

Before he was twenty-five he had been set apart first as a deacon and then as a presbyter; and before he crossed to Scotland he had founded monasteries in Derry and elsewhere. It must be borne in mind, however, that there was little resemblance between the institutions which he organised and what were known as monasteries in the Church of Rome as mediævalism developed and the monastic orders multiplied. Columba's monasteries, alike in Ireland and Scotland, were the headquarters of men who had consecrated themselves to the work of evangelisation, and were there to be trained or to help to train others

for service. They were Mission institutes and divinity halls in one. They were schools of the prophets, and Bible Societies in addition. Far from being places to which men fled who were seeking to abandon the world to itself, they were the temporary retreats of those who had put themselves into the Lord's hands to go wherever He might send them. The ascetic spirit was all that was common to the two kinds of monasteries; but, unfortunately, it was through that spirit that the healthy Evangelical communities which men like Columba founded gradually degenerated until they became hotbeds of indolence and all that indolence brings.

But that evil consummation was still centuries distant when, on a May morning in 563, an open boat made of wicker covered with hides left Loch Foyle for the shores of Scotland. It was a war galley, but it carried neither sword nor spear. It had instead some blacksmith's and carpenter's tools, some implements of husbandry, some fishing nets, and a handmill, along with a sack or two of barley for food, and as much for seed. There was also a leather bottle full of milk, and another with water. Besides that, there were some manuscript copies of the Scriptures and a hymn-book, with some parchment and pens and ink.

There were thirteen men on board, all of them

men of education and kinsmen of their leader. Those who were not barefooted wore shoes of hide, and their clothes were of undyed wool. Their chief was a man at whom we do well to look, as a type of the noblest Missionaries of the Cross. He was forty years of age, and of great strength and stature. His voice could be heard above the noise of the storm more than a mile away; and when he sang the Psalms of David, they echoed down the glens like the sound of a distant waterfall. His grey eye could be soft as the dew of the morning, but it could also flash like the lightning out of the thunder-cloud. He was a born leader of men, who inspired the respect of all who knew him, and who was profoundly loved by those who knew him as companion and friend.

The tradition is that these warm-hearted Irishmen had determined that wherever they went they must be out of sight of the land they loved so well. They could not settle, therefore, in Kintyre, for there the far-distant shores of Erin were still visible. Even when they passed on to Isle Oronsay, the faint outline of the land of their birth could still be seen. And so they came to Iona, that island which has been famous ever since as their home and the centre of their blessed campaigns for Christ and Scotland. Dr.

Johnson spoke of it as "that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion." And, as he adds, "that man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer amid the ruins of Iona."

Columba's coracle had been borne thither by the winds and the waves, but God's hand was on the helm. The island was peculiarly adapted for the work which these Missionaries had to face. It was free from many of the dangers of the mainland in these dark days, when war was not the exception but the rule. It kept them apart and free for the study of the Word and for the transcription of copies of the sacred oracles. For Iona was a Bible Institute, as well as a Theological College and Missionary headquarters. Nor could any spot then have been better adapted for the training of those who were to adventure themselves in search of new worlds to conquer for their Lord. It was a splendid centre for men who could brave the stormiest seas. Thus it was that ere long we find Missionaries from Iona passing from point to point all along the Western coasts, as far North as the Orkneys, establishing a network of

Christian agencies and civilising influences wherever they went. They went Southwards, too, and the Angles and Saxons of Northern England shared in the light which streamed from the island sanctuary.

Before Columba died, his fame had spread as far as Gaul, and even beyond the Alps. As for Scotland and his work there, no fewer than fifty-three places have wells or churches which bear testimony to the extent and the beneficence of his labours. For thirty-four years the great evangelist laboured in Iona, training workers for the service which lay so near his heart, with occasional interruptions when he journeyed to found new churches or to encourage those already planted. Tradition asserts that in the year 584 he visited Kentigern, and saw how the work in the West was progressing.

His first great journey seems to have been to Inverness, the fortress of Brude, King of the Northern Picts. Columba knew that if the king could be won the subjects would follow, for in these cruder days that was a matter of course. That is one reason for the fact that throughout these early ages provinces which were Christian in one generation became pagan the next. That simply meant that a Julian had succeeded a Constantine, that a pagan chief had followed one who had at least

declared himself a Christian. This feature of the situation tends to introduce an element of unreality which is sometimes very disconcerting. Yet there was true work for God going on apart from the conversion of chiefs, apparent or real, and work was being done which has endured from then till now.

Columba was successful in winning Brude to the new ways, and all his wide domain was opened to the itinerant preachers of the Gospel. Columba for one took full advantage of the open doors. On foot he penetrated the glens and straths and crossed the hills wherever heathen families were to be found, proclaiming his message of the redeeming love of God. Scotland has seldom if ever had a preacher so well fitted for this work. A princely presence, a joyous countenance, a magnificent voice, a graceful manner as of one used to courts, an extraordinary knowledge of the Scriptures, strong faith in God, and intense sympathy with men—he was an ideal preacher of Christ. And, like Luther and Wesley, and many another of the same build, he was more than a Missionary—or rather, he was a Missionary of the supreme kind. He was a leader of men, who inspired others with his ideals and sent them out to do work like his own. He was a born organiser, a man of a constructive genius, who laid the foundations deep and

broad for the perpetuation of the work after he and his immediate disciples were gone.

New centres, with Iona as their model, sprang up in many places. Bands of devoted Christians occupied the strategic points; and such was the universal confidence in Columba's wisdom, and so great his influence, that so long as he lived he could deal as he pleased with those in command at these centres. He was only a presbyter in name, but in deed and in truth he was a true bishop; for bishop means an overseer, and by the Divine right to rule, which can never be really gainsaid, he guided and regulated the whole. The tools belong to the man who can use them.

As the end drew near, he was privileged to see much of the fruit of his labours. In 563 he had found Iona practically a desert island. In 597 he left it crowded with those who had offered themselves freely as living sacrifices to God, and a centre from which trained workers were constantly going forth to serve in many a land. In 563 he had found Scotland all but pagan; the work of Ninian almost forgotten, that of Kentigern just begun. In 597 he left it largely under the influence of Christian truth, and in many parts actually won for Christ. He had not only sown good seed, but he had seen the first-fruits of the great and gracious harvest.

His biographer Adamnan makes him say good-bye to the scene of his labours in memorable and prophetic words: "Unto this place, albeit it is small and poor, great homage shall yet be paid, not only by the kings and people of the Scots, but by the rulers of the barbarous and distant nations with their people also. In great veneration too it shall be held by the holy men of other churches." The work in Iona went on for long after he passed to his rest; but prosperity brought wealth and luxury, and by and by superstition brought decay, until at last the light all but died out, and reformation of the most drastic sort was urgently required. The corruption of the best becomes the worst.

This story of these old Scottish Missionaries has been told with some detail because it is typical of what was going on at all the outposts of Europe among Goths and Huns, among Celts and Slavs, among Germans and Scandinavians. It is typical, indeed, not only of the devotion, self-sacrifice, and success of the Missionaries, but also of the ultimate corruption and decay which ensued. It was through men like Ninian and Columba that all Middle and Northern Europe were won from paganism; and even as Iona came under the papal blight in the ages which followed, so it was everywhere after the Missionary enthusiasm had died out and popery was developed.

Never has there been such a gigantic object-lesson in the power of pagan conceptions and practices to poison the very springs of the Church and to sap its strength, as was given on a large scale during these centuries when the light so marvellously kindled was almost quenched. In the long doctrinal conflicts which followed the Imperial recognition, orthodoxy won as against Arianism and other heresies; but by and by she went down before her still more insidious foes—her old enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Even in the most modern Mission enterprise, this object-lesson should be borne in mind; for the same enemies are busy yet—as busy as ever they were. It has to be borne in mind, too, that many of the European peoples received the truth through corrupt channels, and that the Gospel came to them after the deterioration at the centre had begun. The first inroad on the heathenism of Iceland, for example, was not made till 981, and it was even later than that before Greenland was invaded by the Christian Missionary. Many of the Vikings carried home the tidings of the new and strange faith with which they had come into contact in their wars and wanderings, and that was how the Norsemen first heard the Good News. The introduction of the Gospel among the Poles and

Hungarians did not take place till the tenth century; and it was as late as the twelfth century when it was introduced among the Pomeranians, the Finns, and the Lithuanians.

Nor can it be denied that some of the latter-day Missionaries made it only too obvious that they themselves had come under the influence of the reactionary forces which were by this time at work everywhere, although doubtless many of them were better than their theories. They were often characterised by Romanising zeal, rather than by yearning to win souls for Christ; and they had nothing but bitter opposition for the simpler and uncorrupted forms of the faith when they came into contact with them. They would have no fellowship, for example, with married priests, but called them adulterers; and they constantly affirmed that there could be no real union with Christ apart from union with the Roman See. Nor were they averse in many cases to avail themselves of the arm of flesh for the extension of the Kingdom of Him who had specifically forbidden the use of the sword for such an end. Some of these emissaries of Christianity, indeed, were warriors rather than Missionaries; a fatal fact, since here if anywhere force is no remedy, and they who use the sword perish by the sword.

Long before the Reformation, Missionary zeal in

the ordinary sense of the term had disappeared from the earth; and it is hardly possible to recognise the faith or practice of Paul or Polycarp in the superstructure of superstition with which they had by that time been overlaid. Yet, if once we admit the pagan sacerdotal conception that the Christian minister is a sacrificing priest, who can stand between immortal souls and their God, and can pronounce absolution of their sins, it is comparatively easy to account for all that grew out of it. Historians have indeed traced the various stages of the monstrous growth. Yet care must be taken to avoid exaggeration even here. There were always some who were faithful at heart even during these centuries of apostasy and decay. All through the Dark Ages there were simple, loyal souls who kept the fire burning on the altar and were true to their Saviour King; and ever and anon the smouldering embers burst out into a blaze which presaged better and brighter days. Although the Church was grieving and even quenching the Holy Ghost, He was working in society, in the nobler aspirations of humanity, in many movements of thought, in poetry and art; and the reception given to the Evangel when it was proclaimed by men like Wyclif and Luther, Zwingli and Knox, showed that there were many who had never bowed the knee to Baal, and very

many whose hearts were crying out for the living God.

Dark as the Dark Ages were, they were not perhaps quite so dark as some imagine. There are Romish writers who look back on the pre-Reformation era as full of unity and beauty and peace, an age of faith; and there are writers in the other camp who see nothing in Mediæval Europe save the weird fact that the mystery of iniquity was now fully manifested, that the Catholic Church was no longer Catholic, that the Holy Church no longer even presupposed that her priests should be clean, and that the Apostolic Church had turned her back on almost everything characteristic of those who had seen the Lord.

Yet there were rays of light here and there among the shadows; and when we turn, for example, from the ecclesiastical arena to such a writer as Marco Polo, the greatest of the mediæval travellers, it is impossible not to rejoice in what was being done in the worst times to make the Gospel known to the heathen, even if it was being made known in somewhat strange ways. In his memorable pictures of South Indian manners and modes of life, he tells about the Christians of St. Thomas, the native church of India, and of the Thomas shrine, "where few traders *to-day* go, but many pilgrims."

As for Socotra, he reports that the people were Nestorian Christians, with a bishop of their own independent of Rome, and subject to the Archbishop or Patriarch of Bagdad, whose diocese stretched from Socotra to the Sea of China. These Nestorian Christians of Socotra continued, in ever-deepening corruption, till the seventeenth century, when Islam took possession. Marco Polo has also something to tell of the Christians of Abyssinia; nor is he the only traveller who has light to throw on our theme.

At the very time when he was passing through the Southern seas, the Friar John of Monte Corvino, the Missionary founder of the Latin churches in India and China, was staying in the Deccan. The Dominicans penetrated to Tiflis about 1240. In 1260 the Pope corresponded as a Father in God with Hulagu, the conqueror of the Abbasids. In 1318, in spite of the triumphs of Islam, which was destined to triumph still more, we read of the inauguration of a complete Persian hierarchy. And efforts of the same sort, more or less Missionary, were being made among others of the Far Eastern peoples. In China, for example, where Nestorian Missionaries had established a flourishing church in the seventh and eighth centuries, inroads were being made.

In 1278, while the travellers, the Polos, were still in China, Pope Nicolas III. dispatched a religious Mission to Tartary of which nothing is now known beyond the fact of its organisation and the text of its credentials. In 1291, Monte Corvino set out for Cathay, and his second extant letter, dated from Cambaluc or Peking in 1305, tells how he had already laboured there for eleven years alone in the Celestial Empire, and how in 1303 he had received a colleague in Friar Arnold of Cologne. His only other extant letter, which was written probably in February 1308, has a fine record of steady progress. Buildings had been erected, more than five thousand baptisms had taken place, and the Khan was desirous that the Roman authorities should send an official embassy to the Flowery Land.

In the spring of 1307, Monte Corvino was made Archbishop of Peking, and seven bishops were dispatched to be his suffragans in the further work of converting Cathay. Three of these reached China in 1308. The best days of the China Mission of that era came to an end with the death of its founder in 1328; but when the news of his decease reached Europe in 1333, a successor was appointed, and he set out for his post with twenty monks and six laymen. It is

not known, however, whether they ever reached their destination; the one thing really beyond doubt being that the Chinese national reaction, which broke out about 1368, put an end for centuries to Western Christianity and European trade in the Middle Kingdom.

This story, however, throws some light on what was going on even in these dark ages which were not wholly dark. Low as the fire might burn, it never quite went out; nor was the flickering light ever altogether quenched. The true spiritual ancestry of the Missionaries of modern times is to be found in the humble, faithful men and women, all through the ages, who had the new life in their hearts, and never quite abandoned the ideal that all the world should be won for Christ.

Attempts have been made to state in figures the progress which was made by the Gospel during these long, dreary ages, which saw the inroads of the barbarians and the breaking up of the Empire into Eastern and Western; the appearance of Mohammedanism as a great menace to Christianity, and its ultimate conquest of the Eastern Empire; the development and decay of feudalism; and the formation of the nations of Europe very much as we have them now. Starting from Gibbon's most inadequate estimate that there were 6,000,000 Christians in the Empire

when the Edict of Milan appeared in 313, it is calculated that by the end of the fourth century there were 10,000,000; by the end of the eighth century, 30,000,000; by the end of the tenth century, 50,000,000; and by the end of the fifteenth century, 100,000,000. But such speculations are of little value, especially when we bear in mind what we have seen as to how little Christianity sometimes meant by the year 1500. The same statisticians calculate that there are now some 500,000,000 of Christians, or well-nigh one in three of the world-population; and each can judge for himself how far it is true, in any worthy sense of the term, even of the homelands, that one in three can be accounted genuine followers of Christ, to say nothing of the proportion which may fairly be claimed in the regions beyond.

All that can be said with safety, as the result of what had been achieved during the centuries from Constantine to Luther, is that in the sixteenth century all Europe was nominally Christian, with the exception of Turkey; that the lands which witnessed the first triumphs of the Cross were now buried under the drifting sands of the religion of the false prophet; and that under the prevalent ignorance and superstition there were many loyal souls who were

truly united to Christ through repentance and faith. This also may be affirmed with safety, that when in God's grace the Reformation came, it was necessary beyond the power of words to portray.

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION AND MISSIONS

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." —JOHN 7. 17.

"Every man has the defects of his qualities."—*French Saying.*

"The whole moral effect which is produced nowadays by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone. . . . A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."—J. R. GREEN.

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION AND MISSIONS

IT is quite beyond question that the Reformation in the sixteenth century was the greatest event in the history of the Christian Church since the earthly ministry of our Lord. It was a revival of heart-religion so far-reaching and widespread, and withal so absolutely necessary, that it renewed the face of Europe as nothing else has ever done. There have been revivals since, and especially the revival with which the nineteenth century began; but there has been nothing so widespread in its beneficent results or at all so momentous. It is the yearning hope of some and the heartfelt prayer of many more, that this new era of ours will call us to something even grander and more universal.

In the sixteenth century Europe was susceptible to a catholic uplifting as she has never been since. St. Andrews and Aberdeen were then ruled from the same centre as Canterbury and

York; Frankfort and Copenhagen obeyed the same ecclesiastical lords as Vienna and Marseilles. This universal system had led to the same kind of abuses in every land; for in all alike the greed and corruption of Rome were felt and resented, and in all alike the godly and sincere had been alienated from the Vatican and prepared for the Reformation. The English scholar and the Scottish peasant, the German merchant and the Swiss shepherd, the Flemish weaver and the French noble, had all alike suffered from the papal system; and every nation in Christendom had grievances hard to be borne, against the ignorant, licentious priests and friars who swarmed everywhere.

Nor should it be forgotten, in connection with the reach of the movement for reform, that all Europe had then one literary language, which scholars everywhere read and spoke. So truly indeed was Europe one and indivisible then, as it never has been since, in virtue of its common faith and grievances, and its common literary medium, that at times it almost seemed as if the Reformation might renew every part of the Roman Church. When the first great shock of battle, however, was over, it was found that it had triumphed only among the Germanic or Teutonic peoples, and had won the Germans

and the Swiss, the Danes and the English, the Scots and the Dutch. On the other hand, Rome had kept for obscurantism the great Latin or Romance peoples, the French and Spanish, the Italians and the Austrians. Not only so, but the line still remains where it was drawn then. The progressive peoples became Protestant, and are Protestant yet; or perhaps it might be better put that the Protestant peoples have proved themselves progressive, while the others have continued to be superstitious and decadent.

It is only when it is seen how distinctively the Reformation was a religious movement, a vast and widespread revival of true heart-religion, that it is possible to understand what its principles really were or why it took the course it did. When the Holy Ghost works in human souls, He creates a longing for freedom from sin, a yearning not merely for pardon but for holiness—for likeness to Christ, that is. But in the Church of Rome, after the mystery of iniquity was complete, no one of himself could draw near to God. The priests and the entire pagan-sacerdotal system of Confession and the Mass completely and perpetually blocked the way. Hence the first thing which the Reformers had everywhere to do was to proclaim the priesthood of all believers, and to sweep aside every barrier

which popery had placed in the way. It is open to question whether they went as far in this direction as they ought to have done, in loyalty to the New Testament; but in the best of all ways they knew that men can and ought to draw near to God. They had themselves been face to face with Him, brought nigh in penitence and faith.

Inevitably, therefore, the Reformation was a great Home Mission movement. Evangelism of the most aggressive and strenuous sort was its foremost characteristic in every land. In the earlier movings which told that the day was at hand, the first rays of light which were the harbingers of the dawn, the movement was Missionary very much as that in the first century had been. The first inroads, for example, on the gross darkness which had settled down on Scotland after the ill-omened triumphs of Margaret and the Sore Saint, were made by two wandering evangelists, Paul Craw and John Reseby, the one a Missionary preacher from Bohemia and the other from across the English border. That they were both refugees from persecution only increases their resemblance to the Gospel preachers who fled from Jerusalem to Cyprus, Phenice, and Antioch long before. They were sparks from the flame which had been kindled in Bohemia by

John Hus and Jerome of Prague, and in England by John Wyclif, the Morning Star of the English Reformation.

Wyclif's name reminds us, too, of his "poor preachers"—poor, that is, in estate, and not in their preaching—who did the work of evangelisation so splendidly in England long before Martin Luther was born. They showed, what is obvious to all who know the history of Missions in any age, that whenever men and women are filled with the love of God, and are rejoicing in salvation through Christ alone, they cannot but tell others about it. Necessity is laid on them, the supreme necessity of the soul; and mere geographical limitations are of little significance. Home and Foreign Missions are the natural and necessary outcome of new life and ardour, and without them the new life cannot expand as it ought to do.

How true this is, is very abundantly evidenced by the history of the Reformation movement itself when once the day had fully come after the long and dreadful night. The work of evangelism, of preaching the Gospel, or Home Mission work, that is, was everywhere carried on as the foremost duty and privilege of the enlightened and liberated soul.

Luther himself was a preacher of the first order,

a Gospel preacher above all else, and one of the greatest the Church has ever had, alike by word of mouth and through his writings. He sometimes preached every day for weeks together. He often preached three times in a day. As early in his career as Lent in 1517, he preached twice a day in addition to his University lectures, which were also preaching of the best sort. And all this he did without fee or reward, because his whole being was on fire with the love of God and the passion for souls.

True to the new life and its behests, he yearned to share with others the great gifts he himself had received through the free grace of Christ. Wherever he went on his journeys, he preached the glad tidings of salvation; and whenever he preached, men crowded to hear the Word of the Living God. There had been nothing like it since Pentecost, except perhaps some phases of the preaching of the Crusades, and that was on an altogether different plane. At Zwickau, when he preached on one of his journeys, the market-place was crowded by twenty-five thousand eager listeners, and he had to preach to them from a window. On his way to Worms, too, he could not get away from the crowds; while at Erfurt, the great church was often so crowded that they feared it would fall.

And the same prominence was given in these

stirring times in other lands to preaching the Gospel—that is, to Home Mission work among the ignorant and the depraved. All the Reformers, great scholars and theologians as most of them were, were primarily evangelists, preachers, and translators of the living Word. The Scottish reformer George Wishart, for example, was a noted preacher under whose Gospel ministry many were converted; while the English reformer, William Tyndale, was an evangelist whose soul was fired with the sublime purpose that every ploughboy should be able to read the Scriptures in his mother tongue. We read of Wishart that he came forth for his work of preaching after whole days and nights of prayer and meditation, and his success was one of the chief reasons why his enemies felt that they must silence him at the stake. When he heard that Dundee had been visited by the plague in 1544, he hastened to the stricken town as eagerly as others were fleeing from it, and took his place at the head of the east gate, the infected standing on the one side of it, and those who were free on the other. When not preaching, he was constantly employed in visiting the sick and ministering to the wants of the poor, exposing himself without fear to the risk of infection.

Through the preaching of John Knox at Dieppe,

too, although it was mainly as he passed through it on his various journeys, so many were won for God that the city earned the proud title of the Rochelle of the North. Similarly in Holland we find the Reformation movement in the same intimate alliance with the preaching of the Gospel. Motley tells of audiences of six thousand and ten thousand; and on one occasion as many as twenty thousand gathered at Tournay to hear a preacher, Ambrose Wille by name, a follower of Calvin, who was there with a special price on his head. All through Flanders, too, gatherings of immense size and significance were held for the preaching of the Word.

The historian has described one in detail which was held near Haarlem. Tens of thousands were present, he says, many of them armed, and guards were posted. The service began with the singing of a Psalm, and then for four long, uninterrupted hours the preacher, Peter Gabriel by name, who had once been a monk, held the multitude enthralled under the blazing July sun. His text was the eighth, ninth, and tenth verses of the second chapter of Ephesians; as he spoke to his great audience of the grace of God and of faith in Jesus Christ, Who had come to save the lowliest and the most abandoned, if only they would put their trust in Him, his hearers were alternately

exalted with fervour and melted to tears. At times not a dry eye could be seen.

There can be no doubt that the proclamation of the Gospel of God's grace had a great place in the Reformation movement throughout, and that it was a Home Mission movement on the most extensive scale that Europe had ever known. But the astounding and puzzling fact remains that, so far as Missions to the heathen in foreign lands are concerned, hardly anything was done by any of the Reformed churches in Reformation times. When we refer to the Reformation and Missions, it is not so much to tell what was achieved, as to try to explain how it was that in the midst of such fervour, and with so many gracious tokens of the favour of God and the power of His Word, the old marching orders of the Church—never repealed, and once again laid bare with new sanctions—were so thoroughly ignored. This is a problem which no student of Missions, historically considered, can afford to neglect; and that all the more that during this very period of stress and strain in Europe the Church of Rome set herself to win the heathen with unwonted vigour, as if she would redress her losses in the Old World by her gains in the New.

During the three centuries which preceded the advent of Luther, Foreign Missions in the ordinary sense had practically ceased. The exceptions only

prove the rule. But now, in the very midst of the upheaval at home, the papacy is found once more at work in foreign lands.

In 1541, Francis Xavier was sent to India, and thereafter was busy in the Far East until his death in 1552. The whole problem of the moral and spiritual value of Romish Missions and of their unhappy history will be dealt with later on; meanwhile it is enough to say that in the true sense of the term what Xavier did can hardly be called Mission work at all. As Dr. Julius Richter has pointed out, he "never learnt the language of any of the lands he visited, least of all one of the Indian tongues." And truly the lands he visited were many. In his brief career abroad he laboured among the Europeans of Goa, the Paravars, a fisher caste near Cape Comorin, and in Travancore. He had also visited the Island of Malacca, and founded a Mission in Japan, and was on his way to China, ere death closed his eyes at the early age of forty-six.

But this recital of the travels of Xavier suggests what was probably the foremost reason why, at this stirring and revolutionary epoch, the claims of the wider world were so little responded to by the Protestants. It also suggests why the Romanists were first. The maritime nations then were Portugal and Spain, popish peoples

both of them, to their own great loss as well as to the detriment of mankind, as their subsequent decadence so clearly indicates. To them the Papal See had audaciously gifted the whole of the New World after its discovery, and they alone at that time were in touch with the great pagan regions of the Far East. That meant that they alone had the means of entering or even reaching the doors which were beginning to be opened, or which might now be forced.

The same sort of conditions, but with the entire situation almost wholly reversed, have brought it about that in modern times the opening doors have opened first and mainly for the English-speaking peoples, and that the great lines of travel and intercommunication are largely in their hands. Owing to their superior enterprise, and to the fact that coal is almost altogether "Protestant," Great Britain, Germany, and America now occupy, in respect to maritime power and intimate association with the regions beyond, the position that was held in the sixteenth century by Spain and Portugal, and used by them as the willing agents and emissaries of Rome.

When Vasco da Gama first rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and in the year 1498 reached the Malabar coast, he opened up the way for Portuguese colonisation and for planting the banner of

the Cross in India and the Islands of the East. All through, the spirit of adventure and greed which so largely inspired these early pioneers of Empire was mingled with the desire to propagate the Romish faith in the New World and the Far East. Unfortunately, however, the Jesuits and the Franciscans were far from being worthy exponents of the Gospel; and it is not too much to assert that the evil which was done far outbalanced the good, and that the labours of these Missionaries were of little avail. To this day, for instance, the progress of the Kingdom of God alike in South America and Central America is sadly hindered by the bitter fruits and memories of these early expeditions and Missions.

Columbus also was imbued with religious feeling in his voyages; and just as the Franciscans accompanied the Portuguese navigators, the Dominicans entered in the train of the emissaries of Spain. Rivals in the Old World, these monastic orders were rivals also in the New.

Not only so, but both Spain and Portugal were using the monks for their aggressive and political ends, just as France still makes use of them in Syria.

Among the Dominicans was Bartholomew de Las Casas, the most eminent Missionary of his time. He was the first to receive priestly ordina-

tion in America, and his father had been with Columbus during his first voyage of discovery. He set himself to deliver the hapless natives out of the slavery to which they had been reduced by the Spaniards; but those with whom he had to contend were usually able to thwart him and defeat his plans. In his eagerness to help the aborigines, "he crossed the sea twelve times; he traversed every then-known region of America and the Islands; he made repeated journeys from Spain to Flanders and Germany, to see the Emperor on the affairs of his Mission"; yet all the while his literary labours would have been remarkable even in a scholar who had no calling outside of the halls of some college or the quiet of some private study. The one blot on his reputation—and it is a serious one—is that he sanctioned the beginnings of the African slave trade and the introduction of negro slaves into America.

His reasons for doing so were that he wished to spare his converts, and that he knew the Africans could toil in that climate without the same danger to health or life. But that was doing a manifest evil in the interests of a very problematic good, and he lived to deplore bitterly what he had done. But it was then too late to undo the mischief. He was dealing with men who were besotted by the lust for wealth and power, and the

vile traffic went on and grew in spite of him; just as the degradation of the natives continued too. Nor is it at all difficult to understand how that was so, in view of all that still persists on the Congo, in spite of every protest against it and every effort at its abolition.

It is said that trade follows the flag, and it is also true that to some extent Mission work must follow the flag, although there are notable exceptions where the flag has followed Missions. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that in Reformation times, when all the open doors were in the hands of Romish peoples and under Romish flags, and the distances were so vast, none of the Reformers were brought into touch with the heathen nations in such a compelling fashion as to hear the appealing cry or to see the beckoning hand. They did not realise how imperative the Great Commission still was, and it is not our business to apportion the blame.

What we have to do is to discover, if we can, how it was that they seem to have been almost unaware that there were heathen lands waiting for Christ. And this we shall do all the better if we reflect how much it has meant in our own time for Protestant Missions that the Union Jack floats over such vast territories where paganism still persists, and that wherever it waves there is

all a Missionary should ever ask—a fair field for Christian effort, even-handed justice for all, and stern opposition to slavery in every form. To revert to the disgraceful instance of the Congo, what a difference it would have made in that sad region if Great Britain had been in power there instead of that abomination miscalled a Government which has been such a hindrance and snare! This, then, was the outstanding reason for the fact that there were no Protestant Foreign Missions in the great days of the Reformation, although others were already in the field.

But there was another, and very obvious as well as commonplace, reason for the absence of effort abroad on the part of those who were doing such heroic service in so many fields at home. They were so preoccupied with the struggles against the forces of superstition and reaction in the European countries, with their own internal troubles and divisions, and with the work of organisation and setting forth their doctrines in presence of those who were their foes to the death, that it is hardly to be wondered at that they attempted nothing except the work at their own doors, colossal as that was. This requires neither proof nor exposition. It will be peculiarly obvious to those who know anything of the enormous difficulties they had increasingly to

face as the counter-Reformation took shape and grew.

The social problems, too, which gathered round them, such as those which culminated in the woeful Peasants' War in Germany, and which grew out of it, must have been a most portentous barrier to work abroad. As a matter of fact, these difficulties, and the way in which they were dealt with, did much to hinder the work at home.

It is, of course, open to argument whether some of their troubles might not have been averted had the Reformers been more obedient to the duty which is never in abeyance; and also whether we have not here another of those vicious circles which are so often to be met with in the history of Missions. Had the Reformers been even greater than they were, and been loyal from the first to what is the world-wide Mission of the Church in all ages and all circumstances, it is not improbable that they would have been able to deal with the social problems of their age more wisely and more Christianly than they did. It is not open to any one to deny that in this respect they came far short of the Gospel standard; and that in particular Luther abandoned, if he did not betray, the peasants from whose ranks he had come.

In his *Essays on the Social Gospel*, Harnack says that "in spite of the high esteem in which Luther

always held civic authority and the State, his original intention was to reconstruct the Church on the simple basis of government by the congregation. He had visions of a congregational life founded on fellowship and on principles of Christian liberty, fraternity, and equality. It was further his idea that the national element should find free expression, only the nation then meant the Roman Empire of German nationality; and he had in view an improvement in the general economic condition of the country, an increase in the culture, and the upraising of the downtrodden classes." But in his dread lest the religious movement with which he was identified should be made responsible for the social uprising of the serfs, he ended in joining hands with the ruling classes in their determination to crush out the revolutionary movement, with every accessory of cruelty and bloodshed. It is not clear that since these dark days of reaction and betrayal Protestantism has ever enjoyed to any large extent the confidence of the very poorest.

It is also probable that hearty obedience in those days of Reformation to the appeals of the perishing beyond the seas, and outside the pale of civilisation, would have done much to prevent the dreary ages of dogmatism and death which followed the great era of revival and reform. Even if it be the case

that their preoccupations at home prevented the churches of the Reformation from going forth among the heathen, the fact remains that the blight of the deformation soon came on them, and did much to degrade their work in the homelands.

The reflex influence of Missions is enormous; and if there be grounds for holding that the flourishing North African Church of earlier days came to an untimely and unhappy end because it was not a Missionary church, it may also be argued that the Church of the Reformation soon ceased to be healthy, because there can be neither progress nor purity unless there be obedience to plain commands. And it is full of significance that in the second generation of the Reformation era, John Calvin, the prince of exegetes, and as fearless as he was learned, in his commentary on the words of our Lord, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," had not one word to say about the present duty of the Church to those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Another reason which is sometimes added to these explanations of the inaction of the Reformed churches even in the first flush of their new life is that they were influenced by their strong predestinarian views. And in this connection it has

always to be borne in mind that Luther's doctrine regarding election and reprobation was just the same as that of Calvin; and that Anglicans and Independents alike at first occupied the very same position as to the decrees which was held by the Presbyterians, and which finds its best expression in the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith.

It is by no means certain, however, that any of the Reformers held such predestinarian views as could account for their lack of Missionary enthusiasm. It was only in the subsequent era of degeneration that these doctrines became a snare; and in the best days of the Reformation, so long as the revival of heart-religion continued, election was always thought of as a means of grace. It was not looked at from the standpoint of metaphysics, but from that of religion, and therefore was not calculated to blind men to the needs of the regions beyond.

The significance of this distinction is well brought out in the experience of John Knox. It was in the doctrine of the Divine electing love, he tells us, that he first found rest for his soul. For him "predestination was no cut-and-dry doctrine." It came to him full of life and meaning from the Person of Christ. "God hath predestinated me," meant "He hath made me dear by that Beloved"; "as God hath loved Him," thus he

argues, "so hath He loved me; for I am one with Him."

This truth laid hold of the Scottish Reformer by a threefold cord. He felt it to be the one immovable ground for faith, the most powerful argument for a new and humble life, and the greatest incentive to gratitude and love. From what source, he asked himself, did this proceed, this light which he had received in the midst of so much darkness, this sanctification in the midst of so much wickedness? "Not from nature," answered conscience; for nature had made him a child of wrath even as others. "Not from education, or his own study," experience replied. Many who had been nursed in virtue had yet become most filthy in life, while many who had long remained without any virtuous education had yet in the end attained to God's favour. The only source which remained was "that infinite benefit which exceedeth all measure of free grace and mere mercy."

It is true that Calvinism did harden into the anti-Mission attitude, and was used to buttress it; but that was only one of the many proofs of the declension which had taken place—another indication that election had been removed from the realm of religion, and had entered the realm of philosophy. We can see its true spirit and bearing before the days of decline came, when in

the year 1560 we find Knox imprinting the great Mission text on the title-page of the first Confession of the Church of Scotland: "And this glad tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached throughout the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."

The same spirit is also manifest in the instructions which were issued in the name of Edward VI. of England to the navigators whose work resulted in the formation of the East India Company. In the words of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, they were to the effect that "in the sowing of Christianity must be the chief interest of such as shall make any attempt at foreign discovery, or else whatever is builded upon other foundation shall never obtain happy success or continuance." Nor was this altogether theory, and without any corresponding practice. Sir Humphrey's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, took steps to secure the conversion of the natives in the first English colony, that which bore the name of the virgin queen; and the first baptism of a native is recorded as having taken place on 13th August, 1587. And all this is borne out and further illustrated by the fact that, when at length the modern Mission movement began, it was inaugurated by those who were loyal Calvinists, some of them even more Calvinistic than Calvin himself. The blame of the inaction of the

Reformers can hardly, therefore, be put on their doctrine of predestination.

Yet another reason, however, has been suggested for this inaction, an inaction which happily has all along been felt to require some explanation. That is, that Luther was so convinced that the end of the world was at hand, that he thought the final lines of demarcation had been drawn, and must be left where they ran. "Let the Turks believe and live as they choose, just as the Pope and other false Christians are allowed to live," he wrote. He seems to have come to the conclusion that the power of Antichrist had reached its climax; that the nations destined to accept the message of salvation were already gathered within the fold; and that the Gospel having now been preached in its purity, the time of the dissolution of all things was at hand.

How far this was a determining consideration with Luther and his co-workers it is not now easy to say; but it may be remarked that any such arguing gave a wrong turn to the great words which Knox quoted on the title-page of the Scots Confession, as to the Gospel being preached throughout the whole world for a witness to all nations; and that this text still suffers in the same way at the hands of some who are eager supporters of Foreign Missions. To introduce any vindictive

element into such a realm of action is peculiarly unfortunate; and whatever his theory may be, it is not easy to imagine anyone going among the heathen to preach the Gospel as a witness *against* those who reject it. It is more than likely that this plea for the Reformers, or this plea of the Reformers for themselves, is one of those which are *post hoc sed non propter hoc*, and which are so easily found to buttress unworthy practices, after the event.

In the midst of all these explanations as to why the Reformers did not engage in Foreign Mission work, it is needful to bear in mind that even then God did not leave Himself without a witness, although such a historian as Kurtz can only say that "the Reformed Church made one Missionary attempt in the year 1557," and devotes only fifteen lines to the Protestant Missions of that great and formative era.

Strangely enough, the wisest and bravest words which were then spoken on behalf of Missions to the heathen came from Erasmus, who is hardly to be numbered among the Reformers at all, so half-hearted was he in the final issue, although his monumental edition of the Greek New Testament had so much to do with guiding the evangelical movement wherever scholars were to be found. Nor was it students alone that the great scholar

of Rotterdam wished to help; for we find him declaring that the Scriptures ought to be read by clowns and mechanics, and even by the Turks, and should be translated into every tongue.

In his great treatise on the art of preaching, Erasmus appeals to the example of Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, who, although burdened with the care of all the churches and weakened by disease, gave themselves to continual preaching, and sent forth Missionaries to far-distant lands. Eloquently, and in a spirit truly evangelical, Erasmus goes on to urge that Missionaries should be sent to those who had never heard the Gospel, *and* even to its most uncompromising enemies, the Mohammedans. Some of his sentences have not yet lost their point or force, and are well worthy of being quoted once again :—

"We daily hear men deploring," he writes, "the decay of the Christian religion, who say that the Gospel message, which once extended over the whole earth, is now confined to the narrow limits of this land. Let those, then, to whom this is an unfeigned cause of grief, beseech Christ earnestly and continuously to send labourers into His harvest, or more correctly, sowers to scatter His seed. Everlasting God! how much ground there is in the world where the seed of the Gospel has

never yet been sown, or where there is a greater crop of tares than of wheat! Europe is the smallest quarter of the globe; Greece and Asia the most fertile. Into these countries the Gospel was first introduced from Judea with great success. But are they not wholly in the hands of the Mohammedans and men who know not the name of Christ? What, I ask, do we now possess in Asia, which is the largest continent, when Palestine herself, whence first the Gospel light shone, is ruled by heathens? In Africa what have we? There are surely in these vast tracts barbarous and simple tribes who could easily be attracted to Christ if we sent men among them to sow the good seed.

"Regions hitherto unknown are being daily discovered, and more there are, as we are told, into which the Gospel has never been carried. I do not at present allude to the millions of Jews who live among us, nor to the very many Gentiles who are attached to Christ merely by name. Nor do I refer to the schismatics and heretics who abound. Oh, how these would turn to Christ if noble and faithful workers were sent among them, who would sow good seed, remove tares, plant righteous trees, and root out those which are corrupt; who would build up God's house and destroy all structures which do not stand on the

Rock of Ages; who would reap the ripe fruit for Christ and not for themselves, and gather souls for their Master and not riches for their own use!"

What a proof that there is nothing new under the sun! But although the appeal to the churches came thus trenchantly and eloquently, it came from an unpopular hand, and bore but little fruit.

The one definite attempt to do Foreign Mission work in the Reformation era seems to have been that made by Admiral Coligny, the famous Huguenot, who perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and made by him in co-operation with John Calvin. Like the English Puritans in later days, when they sought freedom to worship God as they pleased in another realm across the Atlantic, Coligny had dreams of a freer and happier France in the New World, and readily fell in with a request made by Villegagnon, the Vice-Admiral of Brittany, to send him Protestants to minister to those of that religion in the colony he was about to found in Brazil. This Villegagnon had been at the University of Paris with Calvin; but, unlike him, he had remained a Romanist, and by and by he played the traitor.

In the year 1555, Calvin selected Richer and Chartier, who were joined by twelve others; and as the persecution deepened in France many others desired to follow them. Owing, however, to the

treachery of Villegagnon, they had all to return to France, with the exception of five whom he hurled over a precipice for their loyalty to the faith. The Portuguese completed the ruin of this colony, of which Coligny would have made a new Fatherland in the New World, the first free church in the first free land, as the Pilgrim Fathers were ere long to do in North America. So long as they were allowed to remain, these Protestant preachers were busy among the natives as well as among their fellow-countrymen, and their hearts were cheered by many conversions; but that work also shared in the common ruin, and it was so far incidental merely, that we can hardly claim even this Mission as a Foreign Mission pure and simple.

One other effort was made some three or four years later by Gustavus Vasa of Sweden, who sent Missionaries among the Lapps, the only people in Northern Europe who had never been Christianised at all. Schools were opened and books translated into the language of the people; but neither then nor since has any great progress been made in that inhospitable region. It may be, however, that more was being attempted and done than is on actual record. A hint that that was so may be found in what Hakluyt tells us of Frobisher, the first of the great English navigators. He says that when he set out in 1576 in search of the

North-east passage from the Atlantic to India, he had with him a chaplain, Master Wolfall, who had left wife and children and a good living with the desire of saving souls and reforming infidels to Christianity. And who knows how many such brave and loyal souls there were who went out thus into the darkness with the candle lighted by the Lord in their hands?

There were no Missionary reports in these days to record their deeds of devotion and love. Yet with the best will we cannot claim that much was being done, and not the least of the evil effects of the negative attitude which the Reformation leaders entertained towards Foreign Missions was that it gave the tone to the following generations, which had not their difficulties to face nor their excuses to plead. It was not possible that such an attitude could remain negative merely among those who were quite unable to plead preoccupation as the Reformers might have done, although, as a matter of fact, they never did so. Nor were they long able to plead, as those in earlier years might have done, that the open doors were all in Romish hands, or that the Protestant Churches had no direct contact with the heathen lands. But by that time the pith had gone out of the Reformed Churches, and rationalism had begun to lay its blight on them. But that takes us to a later era.

A German writer on this theme, and no less an authority than Dr. Warneck, makes two inferences from the fact that in the era of the Reformation it was the Church of Rome, and not the Reformers, who were busy in the foreign field. These are, that a church may have a vigorous spiritual life and yet not prosecute Missionary activity; and that a church may be active in Missionary operations and yet be spiritually dead. He holds, further, that this period teaches that there are two conditions of true Missionary activity—spiritual activity, and geographical openings; and from the failure of the attempts made by Coligny and Gustavus Vasa he deduces that the time for Protestant Missions had not yet come.

These deductions, however, can hardly be accepted without material qualifications. On the side of Rome it might be suggested that in spite of the fact that the Romish Church, as such, can claim no credit for Foreign Mission work, and that the Romish powers used the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans for their own political ends, it may have been spiritual life which led some of the humbler agents to engage in work abroad, and thus get away from the distractions and abominations which prevailed in their Church at home. On the side of the Reformers it might also be suggested that more was wanting than

geographical openings to induce them to break ground among the heathen, inasmuch as the Reformed Churches were slow to avail themselves of such openings when they came at length; and that by and by their theologians even argued learnedly and laboriously against engaging in Foreign Mission work.

The truth is that, however their inactivity may be explained or condoned, it stands condemned at the bar of history, and goes far to explain the unhappy trend of affairs in the subsequent generations alike in the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches. There are spots on the sun, and even the Reformers were not perfect. Not only so, but it is quite open to the student to argue that such obedience to the plain command of the Lord, ere He ascended, as was then possible would have done much on the one hand to save the Protestant Churches from the errors into which they soon fell in connection with social and political problems; and on the other hand, would have delivered them from the fearful doctrinal degeneration which soon followed the Reformation.

Every generation has first of all to do with its own duty, and not with that of any other; and with its own failings, and not with the failings of those who have gone before. Yet when men so great and learned and holy as the Reformers were

can come so far short as they undoubtedly did, those who come after may at least conclude that they must be constantly on their guard lest they fail too, and be ever eager to follow on all the way to know the Lord.

CHAPTER VI

THE ERA OF DEFORMATION

"The end of these things is death."—Rom. 6. 21.

"Cold is the malady of the soul."—*French Saying.*

"When the best is corrupted it becomes the worst."—*Latin Proverb.*

> "Miss not the occasion; by the forelock take
> That subtle power, the never-halting time;
> Lest a mere moment's putting off should make
> Mischance almost as heavy as a crime."

CHAPTER VI

THE ERA OF DEFORMATION

IF the worst that can be said about the Reformers and their attitude to Foreign Missions is, that they neglected a duty which can only be neglected at the risk of losing all that is worth preserving, it cannot but be said of their successors that the great majority of them went the length of actually rejecting the appeal of the regions beyond. The negative attitude of the Reformation era, due in part to preoccupation with home problems and domestic difficulties, soon hardened into a positive attitude of aversion, which necessarily reacted sadly enough on the life and thought of the Protestant Churches in all the European nations.

Nor can it ever be otherwise when any part of the Divine law is ignored in theory and practice. The Socinian or anti-supernatural movement—called rationalism in its German manifestations, latitudinarianism as it affected England, and

moderatism as it affected Scotland—in the weary seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was beyond question one of the bitter fruits, the sad effects, of this disobedience to a plain command, of this neglect of an undoubted privilege. But it also deepened the disobedience and neglect in one of those vicious circles which have so often worked woe in the Church of Christ.

The late Professor Masson said that in the Moderate preaching as Scotland knew it, "the events of Judea" were deemed needless; and whenever that is the case, Foreign Missions, aye, and Home Missions too, must be unfruitful or unknown. But it is also one of the many questions which that unhappy time addresses to our happier age, how far the events of Judea cannot but cease ere long to be thought essential in any church which neglects the perishing in the great lands of heathenism, and does not set itself to give the best it has to those for whom Christ died. The reflex influence of work abroad on the home churches has often been insisted on; but the reflex influence of the neglect of such work is equally important, and it is not improbable that all the serious doctrinal heresies could be traced back to that great practical heresy.

As soon after the heroic days of the Reformation as the year 1664, when Baron von Welz issued an

appeal to "all right-believing Christians of the Augsburg Confession, regarding a special Society through which, with the Divine help, our Evangelical Religion could be extended," his plans were stigmatised as a dream by a prominent theologian, Ursinus by name; and the very thought of casting the "holy things of God" before such "dogs and swine" as the heathen were, was treated with indignant scorn. Welz returned to the attack, however, and demanded whether it was right that those who had the Gospel should keep it to themselves; that students of theology should be confined to the home parishes; or that Christians should spend so much on clothing, eating, and drinking, and take no thought to spread the Gospel. He pleaded that Missionary colleges should be established in every Protestant University, and that bursaries should be founded for the encouragement of those who were desirous of becoming foreign Missionaries.

Nor was that all that this true nobleman did in his courage and zeal. He gave himself to the work for which he pleaded, and went out to Dutch Guiana, taking 36,000 marks with him for the necessary expenses. Yet out among the heathen he only found an early grave, in the midst of those for whose salvation he yearned so much; while at home he seemed to the Christians of his

time as one who dreamed; held fast as they were in bondage to the prejudices which had come down to them through the attitude and practice of their nobler predecessors.

Nor did these prejudices quickly pass away before the appeals of the Gospel or the needs of men. As late as the year 1786, when William Carey asked, in a company of Baptist ministers at Northampton, "Whether the command given to the Apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent," he was met, as everyone knows, by the rebuke from the chairman: "You are a miserable enthusiast for asking such a question. Certainly nothing can be done before another Pentecost, when an effusion of miraculous gifts, including the gift of tongues, will give effect to the Commission of Christ."

Ten years later, in 1796, after the Evangelical Revival had really begun, after both the Baptist Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society had been founded and were actually at work, a majority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland declared "that to spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel among the barbarous and heathen nations seems to be highly preposterous, in so far as it

anticipates, nay, it even reverses, the order of nature." And these fathers and brethren, too, came to that decision, even after Dr. John Erskine had said, "Rax me down that Book," and had read the plain and unequivocal command of their risen Lord and Master to preach the Gospel among all nations.

It is not easy to imagine what the Gospel meant either at home or abroad for men who held such views, and followed such practices, with the name of the Lord Jesus on their lips. But so it was, even as Christians used to support slavery, and Christians still have no horror of war; and it was not till the year 1824 that the pathetic finding of the Venerable Assembly was reversed under the genial and illuminating influence of the blessed Evangelical Revival. The truth is that for very many, Calvinism, once a means of grace, had become fatalism; and that what professed to be the Evangel had either emasculated the Gospel or had turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. Whenever the blessings of the Gospel had become real for the churches at home, they began to hear the bitter cry of those who were still in the darkness, and to respond to their appeal to come over and help them. Those who say they do not believe in Foreign Missions are not bearing a very lofty testimony as to what the Gospel has done for

themselves. The true proof that Christ has done great things for us is the desire to share the blessing with others.

For after all it is not so difficult to understand the attitude of indifference of the great mass of professing Christians all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it is borne in mind that in practice that is still the attitude of a very large number of those who in one way and another bear the name of Christ, and that it is still even the theory of not a few of them. Many who ought to know better still declare that it is cruel to disturb the idyllic state of nature in which the heathen rejoice; the hideous cruelties of the dark places of the earth being ignored or forgotten. Those who know the pagan peoples at first hand can never say that we ought to leave them as they are, unless indeed they go to the opposite extreme of holding that, far from being idyllic, their state is so degraded that it is not possible to do them any good.

Then there are those who take up the cry that the preaching of the Gospel spoils the natives, and that alike in India and South Africa it has made them greedy, intractable, and dishonest; which in practice either means that the Gospel is blamed for the results of a bastard civilisation, or that it has helped to make the natives into men and

women with new rights, and no longer mere chattels to be bought or sold. There are even Christian teachers and moralists who maintain that there are tribes of men for whom the worship of the False Prophet is a necessary preparation for the worship of the true God, and that their becoming Mohammedans will open up their way to becoming Christians. The same critics sometimes also hold that Missions to Mohammedans are altogether vain and fruitless.

In addition to all these enemies of the Mission enterprise, for whom certainly the plea cannot be offered that they have been led astray by their ultra-Calvinism, there are not a few who show their bent by doing nothing whatever to promote Mission work of any kind, and make it manifest that they grudge all that is spent on such work, and deem it thrown away. Sometimes, like the old latitudinarians or Moderates, they profess to take up this position in the interests of the work at home ; and like them also, they neglect the work at home just as they ignore the work abroad. It is still, as it was in the dreary ages of the Deformation—when the Church was frozen by formalism and dogmatism—and as it has always been, those who are callous about the perishing abroad are just those who do least to spread the Good News in the waste places in the homelands.

Those who declare that they have more to do than they can undertake in their work at home seldom seem to be overburdened by it, and their leisure is very ample. The truth is that those who do not believe in the need for the Gospel abroad, or in its Divine power to regenerate and purify the most degraded in any land, have little faith in its power to regenerate men at home. Nor are they greatly troubled as a rule by the need for regeneration either of those at home or abroad. It is not merely the great parting command of the Lord they ignore; they ignore also the great and fundamental word which meets us on the very threshold of His ministry: "Ye must be born again."

It is well to be perfectly frank in a matter so vital, and there is indeed no difficulty in understanding why rationalists and latitudinarians alike were in no way eager to carry a Gospel abroad which they ignored and even denied at home. The only difficulty lies in understanding how such views and practices came to prevail in churches which had been born in the great revival otherwise known as the Reformation, and which had been used of God to do such marvellous things for the sinning and suffering sons of men in so many lands.

The most obvious contribution towards the solution of this problem is just what has been seen

as to the neglect of Foreign Missions during the revival era itself, however that neglect may be accounted for or may remain unaccounted for. This is borne out by the fact that whenever the Church began to live at home, and got a wider outlook, a new interest was shown in the work abroad. The new era in Home Missions and philanthropy, which is so well named the Evangelical Revival, was coincident with the new era in the work abroad, and with the birth of all the great Missionary societies.

The whole history of the Church has made it clear that, so long as these two halves of the one whole grow side by side, both will prosper: and if this be acted on, the dread ice-age, which proved so disastrous to the sub-Reformation churches, will not again come with its terrible blight. But to avert such a doom, it must be constantly recognised that these two halves of the one whole have been joined by God, and that men and churches can only put them asunder at their extreme peril. In many respects a dead orthodoxy is not essentially different from a dead heterodoxy, and all through this period of reaction the attitude to Missions of those who were grimly orthodox in their creed was exactly the same as the attitude of those who had come under the power of a Socinianism which could not but make the Gospel of none effect.

It is well to remember, however, that even during these dreary centuries of death the fire on the altar never quite went out, and the embers which were to be fanned into the bright blaze of the Evangelical Revival were never wholly extinguished.

Unhappily, the controversies and complications, and even the corruptions, of the ecclesiastical situation in Europe were being carried among the heathen. In the homelands the followers of Ignatius Loyola had set themselves to undo the work of the Reformation, and were able at least to limit it and to prevent the reformation of Rome herself, a consummation which at one time seemed not improbable. One result of their campaign was that the various European nations had to make their choice, and a portentous choice it proved to be. Those peoples which then chose to be free from Rome are free still ; while those which stood by her then are still, willingly or unwillingly, in her toils, and sharing in her degradation.

But the representatives of Rome also sought to redress her losses in the Old World by conquests in the New World as well as among the ancient heathen peoples on the other continents. The great territories of the Far East which were still closed to Protestantism were open to them wherever the flags of Spain and Portugal waved. But while

they often met with apparent success, a success which was all the more rapid because it was so superficial and unspiritual, in not a few cases the end was terribly disastrous. In Japan, for example, we have an outstanding instance of how their work was done, and of what ensued. To this day the evil reputation of these early Romish Missionaries survives among the Japanese, and has been a serious barrier to the Gospel playing its proper part in this era of the regeneration of what may yet be the Britain of the Eastern Seas. Before the end of the sixteenth century it was claimed that the Jesuits had no fewer than 600,000 adherents in Japan. It has, however, to be borne in mind in connection with this and similar claims that they are often quite unfounded and unreliable. That is admitted even by Roman Catholic authorities; as, for instance, when the Secretary of the *Congregatio de propaganda fide* says in a report to Pope Innocent XI. (1676–1689) that "it seems to be the constant opinion of all the members of the congregation that little credit is to be given to the Relations, Letters, and Supplications that come from the Missionaries."

In any case, the Japanese authorities became suspicious, as well they might, that the Missionary invasion was in reality a Western conspiracy for the destruction of their national independence, and

resolved to crush out the new movement. From 1615 onwards a bitter persecution was waged, and in 1624 all foreigners except the Dutch and the Chinese were expelled from the country, and the long seclusion of Japan was begun. The strange thing about the persecution, however, was that although, as Guysbert points out, the martyrs knew little about the Christian religion except the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*, and a few other church prayers, and were quite destitute of the Scriptures, they met their fate with much heroism. Not only so, but when Japan was opened up at length in modern times, traces were found in the villages around Nagasaki of the work done in the seventeenth century, inadequate and even unworthy as that work had been. To all intents and purposes, however, the edifice which the Jesuits had reared was entirely demolished, and another illustration was given of the fact, too often overlooked, that the blood of the martyrs is not necessarily the seed of the Church.

History declares with no uncertain sound that the work of the Jesuits in the Far East left no perceptible impression on the moral and spiritual character of the people among whom they laboured, a truly remarkable result of movements which seemed so successful for a time. Yet their failure can easily be understood if the description which

Xavier himself has left of his Missionary methods is borne in mind.

Speaking of his work among the pearl fishers of Tuticorin, he says: "In each village I leave one copy of the Christian Instruction. I appoint all to assemble on festival days and to chaunt the rudiments of the Christian faith; and in each village I appoint a fit person to preside. For their wages, the Viceroy at my request has assigned four thousand gold fanims. Multitudes in these parts are not Christians only because none are found to make them Christians." "Here I am almost alone from the time that Anthony remained sick at Manapar; and I find it an inconvenient position to be in, in the midst of a people of an unknown tongue without the assistance of an interpreter. Roderick, indeed, who is here, acts as an interpreter in the place of Anthony; but you know well how much they know of Portuguese. Conceive, therefore, what kind of life I live in this place, what kind of sermons I am able to address to the assemblies, when they who should repeat my address to the people do not understand me nor I them. I ought to be an adept in dumb show. Yet I am not without work; for I want no interpreter to baptize children just born, or those whom their parents bring, nor to relieve the famishing and the naked who come my way. So

I devote myself to these two kinds of good works, and do not regard my time as lost."

Nor is it in the Far East alone that such methods and such results are found. In the region of the Congo, too, where such magnificent triumphs have been won by modern Missionary effort, spasmodic attempts were made by Portuguese Missionaries from the fifteenth century. By the year 1584, a native king had even been baptized and a cathedral built at Ambasse (Sao Salvador). Towards the close of the eighteenth century, however, the Portuguese Government expelled all religious orders; and when the Baptist Missionaries began their work in 1879, the Congo territory was to all intents and purposes a heathen land. Nor is it surprising to find that these Missions, and others like them, were dogged with failure when it is found out what conversion to Christ in their case often meant. There also evangelisation by the language of dumb show has been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

It is all very strange, even weirdly so; and it reveals how widely the poison of pagan superstition had spread in the Romish Church, and how completely sacerdotalism in its worst forms of magical efficacy had taken hold of Romanism at its best. History has passed its verdict on these sub-

Reformation Missions of the Romish Church, and has put the stamp of unequivocal condemnation on them and on all who follow in the ways in which they went. He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit says.

Nor were the Protestant churches altogether idle or indifferent throughout this sad time of declension. What may be thought of as the first Protestant Missionary Society was formed by the Long Parliament in 1649, through the creation of a corporation called the "President and Society for the Propagating of the Gospel in New England." This was done in response to a petition sent to Parliament in 1641 by some seventy English and Scottish ministers, and a resolution of the General Court of Massachusetts which ordered the County Courts to see to it that the Indians residing within their respective shires should be instructed in the knowledge and worship of God. The Red Indians were the first heathen to become British subjects; and on the principle of beginning first at Jerusalem, Cromwell and the Puritans naturally began Foreign Mission work among them. That they did so affords some proof that there is something in the plea that the inaction of the Reformers was largely due to the lack of opportunity and geographical propinquity.

Among others who were aided and encouraged by this Society was John Eliot, the earliest Puritan Missionary of note. He was born in Essex in the year 1604; and when he died in 1690, at the age of eighty-six, with the words "welcome," "joy," on his lips, he had the satisfaction of knowing that there were eleven hundred Indian members in the six congregations he had been able to form, and that two of these congregations were under native pastors. The good work begun so well, even if somewhat tardily, was carried on by other like-minded pioneers, among them being David Brainerd, the ever-memorable Missionary to the Indians. This latter died in 1747, at the early age of thirty, but his brief Missionary career of three years was full not only of ceaseless labours but of abundant fruit. And even as the British colonists in North America were thus endeavouring in some little measure to realise their responsibilities to those among whom their lot had been cast, so it was also to some extent with the Dutch colonists who had now in the providence of God replaced the Portuguese in the Far East.

On the continent of Europe, too, the influence of Pietism was beginning to be felt; and, under the power of sporadic revivals of heart-religion, many were being stirred by pity for the heathen out in the wilderness. Whenever men feel the

true worth of the Gospel for themselves, they soon begin to pity those who know nothing of the comfort and gladness which it brings.

The earliest Mission to grow out of this movement was begun in Denmark by Dr. Lutkens, one of the Royal chaplains, and in his endeavours he had the support of King Frederick the Fourth. The men whom he sent out to Tranquebar, on the South-east coast of India, had been trained in the atmosphere of German Pietism. The Mission itself, indeed, owed more to the efforts of Francke, the renowned founder of the orphan house at Halle, than it did even to the Danish king and his good chaplain, and it is appropriately called the Danish-Halle Mission.

The two Missionaries who were sent out first were the famous Ziegenbalg and a brother in arms called Plutschau. They did not reach Tranquebar till July 1706, having spent more than seven months on the way. From the Cape of Good Hope, at which they touched and where the Dutch were then masters, they sent home such a lamentable account of the condition of the Hottentots that the Moravians were moved to begin the first Mission to South Africa. There were indeed indications of a new spirit now in various quarters, and a new readiness to respond to the appeal of need; and the accounts which Ziegenbalg sent to

Francke, regarding the progress of the work at Tranquebar, raised up many friends for the novel enterprise. Amongst others, King George the First of England, a strange personage to be interested in Missionary effort, sent a letter rejoicing in the work, and expressing gratitude that in England too a laudable zeal for the promotion of the Gospel now prevailed.

The great Missionary church of the Moravian Brethren also received part at least of its first Missionary impulse from the same Pietists who inspired the work at Tranquebar. In that connection there now appears the name of the famous Count Zinzendorf, on whose estates the persecuted fugitives from Moravia had settled in 1722. Incited by the story of the sufferings of the negroes in St. Thomas, in the West Indies, and of the patient although unsuccessful labours of Hans Egede, a Norwegian pastor, in Greenland, Zinzendorf and his friends determined to send two of their number to each of these fields of service. This was in the year 1732 ; and ere another quarter of a century had elapsed, eighteen Missionaries had gone forth, without purse or wallet, from Herrnhut, to plant stations in the waste places of the earth, and to gather a community from among the heathen which was destined by and by to outnumber far the community in the mother church

at home. The distinction of the Moravian Church among all other Missionary churches is that ever since 1732 it has been Missionary in the sense in which the Early Church was Missionary—that is, every member is a Missionary, and the question of his sphere is simply a matter of geographical arrangement.

Yet these Pietist Missions for long were no more than points of light which made the surrounding darkness the more visible. The organised churches of the living God stood aloof as yet in their ignorance and selfishness, and the influence of these early heroic Missionaries was less than might have been expected. Perhaps the time had not yet come for the great forward movement; and these brave Missionary pioneers were not only few in number and often untrained and even uneducated, but they entirely reversed, as we have seen, the method of the Missionaries of Apostolic and post-Apostolic days in one very important particular. The Apostles and their successors assailed the strategic centres, and went where Satan's synagogues were. These eighteenth-century Missionaries, on the other hand, went to tribes so obscure or so savage that even successful work among them hardly told on the great citadels of heathenism, or on the great non-Christian and anti-Christian systems. "It was

magnificent, but it was not war"; and while the men of every age must seek to face the new duties and appeals of their time in the new light which the Holy Spirit never fails to send, the Apostolic method in this respect was most abundantly justified by the result.

In any case, the fact remains that, as the Evangelical Revival drew near, it can hardly be said that modern Missions emerged from these eighteenth-century efforts, any more than it can be said that the Reformation grew out of the work of "the Reformers before the Reformation." Indeed, as has so often been the case, the darkness seemed only to grow deeper as the dawn drew nearer. During the second half of the eighteenth century it almost appeared as if Evangelical religion had died out in the churches. The Reformation had apparently spent itself, and the time of the next awakening had not yet come.

An apologist for this era of reaction and death says that the Reformed Churches spent the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in presenting the Gospel to Europe, and then in the nineteenth century went out to declare it to the heathen. But such a statement does more credit to the writer's imagination and to his powers of antithesis and generalisation than to his historic sense, for nothing could be a more inadequate description

of what actually took place. In the closing decades, Methodism apart, the Gospel was hardly ever preached either in Europe or among the heathen, if by the Gospel is meant the glad tidings of the grace of God. Here and there in England and Germany a few scattered communities of Moravians and Methodists, of Puritans and Baptists, heard the good news of salvation for the world, and received it; although even they often seemed to be afraid to take their Father, too literally, at His word.

In Scotland, too, during these years what were called the Praying Societies arose, little gatherings of cottars and weavers in town and country, who drew together around Christ, and ultimately became centres of light and leading when the day broke. But even in the homelands the Gospel was chilly, as became the Evangel of an ice-age; and the grim reality of the frost may be imagined when we discover that the blight of rationalism and unbelief fell even on the Missionaries out at the front, where for a time the lights had been shining like stars in the thick darkness.

That the very light had become darkness gives some conception of how dense the darkness was. But this was only another reminder that the work of God is one and indivisible, although the reminder comes to us in an unusually pathetic way.

It is not only the case that Foreign Mission work reacts on the life of the churches at home, and brings blessing there, and that those who are not loyal at home will not be very eager abroad; it is also the case that the home churches may so react on the work abroad as to bring decay and disaster on them. They cannot but stand or fall together; and instead of it being specially easy to keep the spiritual life fresh and pure out at the front, it is very easy to be influenced adversely by the impact of heathenism and the persistence of the heathen atmosphere. The Church abroad must continually draw inspiration from the Church at home, as well as convey such inspiration back in return. A healthy church must be active on both sides of the imaginary line which men draw, and which God in His providence persistently ignores.

What a portent it was that even the Danish-Halle Mission, associated for ever with the names of Francke and Ziegenbalg, was ultimately undermined by the same subtle foe which had sapped the churches at home! That Mission had indeed begun most hopefully. Within ten months of the arrival of the Missionaries at Tranquebar, they had the joy of baptizing five adults, heathen slaves of Danish masters, while only four months later nine Hindu converts were baptized. Yet ere the fatal eighteenth century had come to an end, the

Mission was only saved by being taken over by some Church of England Missionaries, who cared for it until the Dresden-Leipzig Lutheran Mission took it up again in happier days of revival and quickening.

The dawn, however, was now at hand; and among the harbingers of its coming were some of the Missionary hymns which are still in use. The Church is never so winsome and attractive, nor yet so aggressive, as when she is engaged in praising her Lord. Early in the eighteenth century the first foreign Missionary hymn appeared, that of Bogatzky, "Wake up, thou spirit of the first martyrs," as it is in its English dress. Watts' hymn, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," was written in 1719; and Williams's hymn, "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness," in 1722; while "Arm of the Lord, awake, awake," "Behold the mountain of the Lord," and "Sing to the Lord in joyful strains," all appeared before the middle of the century.

Once again, therefore, it must be insisted on that there has always been a faithful remnant; and even during this degenerate age this was made evident in various ways. Among those who helped to redeem it, there are two names which towards its close stand out in special splendour, and who also did much to hasten the

brighter time which was to come—Christian Friedrich Schwartz and William Carey.

The former of these heroes, who was born in 1726 and died in 1798, was a Prussian. From his birth his mother dedicated him to the service of the Saviour, and in due time he was sent to study at Halle, under Francke. It is one of the features of this period that in the story of it we are continually coming across the name of Francke, wherever good work was being done either at home or abroad. Nearly everything that was then done to extend the Kingdom of Christ can be traced directly or indirectly back to one common consecrated source, that of the German Pietists. So much can even one ray of light do to illumine the darkness.

At Halle, Schwartz came into contact with Schultze, one of Ziegenbalg's earliest colleagues at Tranquebar, who was at home arranging for the printing of a new edition of the New Testament in Tamil. Schwartz himself went out into the firing line in his twenty-third year, in spite of all the protests of his friends; and in those days, and from the standpoint of that generation, it must have seemed peculiarly insane to do such a thing. But long after, and when his work was nearly at an end, his own testimony was this: "I am now on the brink of eternity, but to this moment

I declare that I do not repent having spent forty-three years in the service of my Divine Master Who knows but God may remove some of the great obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel? Should a Reformation take place among the Europeans, it would no doubt be the greatest blessing to the country." He did not live to see it, but many of the obstacles which he deplored were ere long to be swept away by the mighty hand of God.

When Schwartz went out to India, the East India Company—which later on was to be at first unfriendly to Carey and others—not only gave him a free passage, but afforded him such countenance as secured him peace in his work. And he did a great work, alike in the Company's territories and in Mysore. He laid the foundation of the Native Christian Church of India, which on its Protestant side alone has now more than a million members. He was the first to establish Christian vernacular schools; for, like all the other great Missionaries, he put much importance on the work of education. He was the first, too, to anticipate famine and make provision for it, after 1780, by storing rice which went to feed not only the dying natives but also British troops. His ward, Raja Serfoji, erected a Christian church and manse in his fort; and when the Missionary died, both this

Hindu Prince and the East India Company erected splendid memorials to him. As a proof and instance of the kind of influence which he exerted and of the impression which his work made, it is on record that when the Madras Government were negotiating with the famous Hyder Ali, he said: "Send me the Christian: he will not deceive me."

The noble work for India which was done by Schwartz was greatly extended by William Carey, who appeared at the seat of war in 1793, five years before his forerunner died. Carey, who was the first Englishman to become a Missionary to the East, was born in Northamptonshire, on 17th August, 1761, just when the darkness before the dawn was at its worst. He was apprenticed to a shoemaker when he was fourteen. Four years later he was converted and became a Dissenter. When he was twenty-six he was ordained as Baptist minister at Moulton. Thereafter he was minister at Leicester, in the congregation which was afterwards presided over by the famous preacher, Robert Hall.

He grew up amid the forces which in France brought about the epoch-making Revolution of 1789, and which in reality were revolutionary on both sides of the Channel. In this country these forces were only prevented from culminating in horrors

like those which desolated France, by the new religious influences which, without observation of men, were beginning to lay hold of the very classes that would otherwise have been most dangerous. The same yearnings which, when they were perverted reared the guillotine in France, when they were sympathetically directed sent Carey across the seas to his work among the heathen, and roused Wilberforce to his saving, healing work at home.

Carey was a shrewd thinker, a keen observer, and very diligent and studious withal; while his linguistic powers were of the most remarkable order. In spite of vast hindrances, he acquired Latin, Greek, French, Dutch, and Hebrew. From 1781 he never ceased to insist that it was the Church's duty to send the Gospel to the heathen; and steadily, if slowly, the influence of his appeal grew. Scott the commentator speaks of the cobbler's shop at Hackleton as "Carey's College," while Andrew Fuller tells how he found him at his stall in Moulton, with a map of the world pasted up on it, and on this the religious and political statistics of all the nations were set forth as they were then known.

In 1792 he published his book entitled *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*, a

wonderful and unique combination of accurate information, wide generalisation, and impassioned appeal. Eventually, on the second day of October in that same year of grace 1792, the Baptist Missionary Society was founded at Kettering, in a house which is still visible to passers-by on the Midland Railway. A constitution was drawn up, and a collection was taken in a horn box which was exhibited in 1908 at the Orient Exhibition in London. The twelve ministers present contributed no less than £13 2s. 6d. It is well worth noticing that these heroic founders of the first English Missionary Society were all predestinarians, and that they were loyal to what they believed to be true Calvinism—the Calvinism of Paul and Augustine and Columba, the Calvinism which makes election a means of grace, the Calvinism of Wyclif and Knox and probably Calvin himself, as distinguished from the false teaching which had emasculated Christianity and arrested the Church of the Reformation.

William Carey landed in India in 1793, and after forty-one wonderful years spent in Bengal without a break, he died on 9th June, 1834, having rendered to the cause of the Gospel services which can never be forgotten. He served Christ and India with the best he had, which was much; his linguistic work, for instance, being invaluable not only to

the cause of Missions but to the science of philology. During these fruitful years the Scriptures were translated into the vernacular, schools and the Serampore College were opened, Medical Mission work was begun, converts were won and trained to win others, and churches were established. In a word, the foundations were wisely and firmly laid for all the wonderful and varied Mission work which is now being carried on so zealously and so successfully in our vast Indian Empire.

The careers of these two outstanding Indian Missionaries suggest a passing reflection on the influence, in connection with the spread of the Gospel, which has been exerted by the East India Company. At first, as we saw, it had a religious basis, which Charles Grant, as twice its Chairman, and his sons, Sir Robert Grant and Lord Glenelg, always built upon. But by and by, and perhaps necessarily, that disappeared; and those who directed its truly Imperial affairs concerned themselves only with trade, and with Government merely as an incident of their trading operations. As was noted, they gave Schwartz a free passage and encouraged him in his work; but when Carey went out they did all they could to hinder and hamper him, for political ends. Indeed, he had to go out to India in a Danish vessel. The same policy drove Newell to Ceylon,

and Judson to Burma, and was thus overruled by God for the extension of His Kingdom. It likewise kept out the Haldanes, although unconsciously this brought much blessing on the homeland, and especially Scotland.

Yet it cannot be gainsaid by any reverent student that God gave India to Great Britain for gracious ends, and in order to subserve the progress of Mission work in Asia. At its best, the Company was little more than neutral, while at its worst its officials were persecuting; but, all the same, it proved to be a great *præparatio evangelica* all over Southern Asia. It did for the Missionary in the Far East something not unlike what the Roman Empire did for the Missionaries in the first Christian centuries. It secured order where there had been anarchy, and it brought peace where there were only interminable wars. It made roads and even railways, it developed the postal system and means of intercommunication generally; and in many ways it helped to quicken the conscience of the churches at home, when by and by the Evangelical Revival had begun to create such a conscience.

At times, it is true, the Company may have done this through its opposition to Missions; but it also did it by those pensioned officials who came home after their work was done, and who

were able to tell what it was that India really needed most. And it helped in other ways, as, for example, when, moved by Charles Grant, Charles Simeon was able to arrange for five Evangelical ministers to go out technically as chaplains but in reality as Missionaries. Their names are sufficient to show how truly they were more than official chaplains: Henry Martyn, Claudius Buchanan, Daniel Corrie, David Brown, and Thomas Thomason.

One of the Directors of the Company once said that he would rather see a band of devils landing in India than a band of Missionaries; but these chaplains of the Company did splendid Missionary work alike among the Europeans and the natives. We find as proof of this that Carey wrote in 1806: "A young clergyman, Mr. Martyn, is lately arrived, who is possessed of a truly Missionary spirit. We take sweet counsel together, and go to the House of God as friends." And at another time we find him writing: "Wherever Mr. Martyn is placed, he will save us the expense of a Missionary."

Most manifestly God gave India to Britain that that great Empire of the East might be brought under civilising and Christianising influences. It is not Jingoism or even blind Imperialism to say that no political factor has done so much for the development of Mission work as the Empire of

Great Britain in the East—the Opium Traffic and much else notwithstanding. But there is another side to all this—and it is becoming more and more evident that, unless, along with Western culture, Britain gives India and her awakening millions the civilisation which the Gospel alone can secure, it will not be possible for her to retain her hold. If she dissociates herself from Christianity, she robs herself of her strength, and destroys her Divine and even historical warrant for being in India at all. The East India Company was primarily a commercial concern, and may have been afraid of its profits, if the light of Divine truth shone too clearly in the land; doubtless some things were done which could not stand a very close scrutiny. But so far as the Imperial Government is concerned, she has nothing to gain and everything to lose by turning a cold shoulder to the Missionaries, who are the best friends she has; and not a few of the noblest of our Indian statesmen are the foremost to declare that she already owes more than tongue can tell to what the Missionaries have done.

What her debt will be when all that great Empire has been illumined by Divine truth and won for Christ, who can estimate? But may the time soon come for trying to form such an estimate! The disintegrating forces cannot now be kept out of any land, and they are nowhere busier

than in India. The Gospel alone can reintegrate. The Gospel alone can put the social order there, or anywhere, on an enduring foundation. The cry, "India for Christ," should come with peculiar significance and power to all British Christians.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."—Isa. 52. 7.

"The tools belong to the man who can use them."—Napoleon.

"Christianity is more human than Calvinism, more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either."

CHAPTER VII

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL

"THE Evangelical Revival in England, together with the new sympathy for humanity which manifested itself in the social and political movements of the later years of the eighteenth century, ushered in a period of Missionary activity; an era which, in the history of Missions, is only less remarkable than the first of the Christian centuries." Such is the testimony of one who is at once a thoroughly competent theologian and one of the wisest of modern Church historians. And it is a true witness to what was achieved in those wondrous years of quickening from the presence of the Most High God, of which we are still enjoying many of the fruits. It is a moderate estimate, too, of the place which the Evangelical Revival occupies in the growth of the Christian Church, and especially of Christian Missions.

There had been local and sporadic revivals here and there all through the eighteenth century, re-

actionary though it was, especially in Great Britain and America. Of these the most outstanding was, of course, the upheaval which will always be associated with the great names of Whitefield and the Wesleys. Through that awakening, the doctrines of the Reformation—justification by faith alone, and the direct access of the penitent to God—first became real for the common people of England. Until then it had never been quite correct to say that they had heard the Gospel gladly. In some ways it could hardly be said that they had heard it at all, and in that regard the Methodist Revival did for the people of England what the Reformation revival had done long before for the poorest both in Germany and Scotland.

There have been few greater gifts of God to His Church in any age, even the Apostolic, than the gift of John Wesley. The non-enthusiastic Lord Macaulay says that "Wesley conducted one of the most wonderful moral revolutions the world ever saw. His eloquence and his piercing logic would have made him an eminent literary man, and his genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu." Mr. Lecky, too, who was still farther removed than Macaulay from any enthusiasm for evangelism, expressly asserts his conviction, that it was the influence of Wesley and those who were associated with him which saved

Britain from horrors like those in which the eighteenth century expired in France. Nor was the English revolution any the less real or effective that we were spared the horrors.

Strangely enough, however, the Foreign Mission side of the Methodist movement was not developed at first; and towards the end of this period of declension and death which has just been dealt with, it would almost appear as if even the Methodist Revival was beginning to lose its power, so subtle and all-pervading was the influence of the unbelieving spirit of the age. And who knows whether even it might not have come under the power of the blight like the other movements of that era, had not the appeal of the perishing multitudes in the regions beyond been heard in time to prevent a collapse? With the story of the post-Reformation Church before us, it is impossible to say what depths might have been fathomed, had believers continued to be deaf alike to the cry of the perishing heathen and to the clear and unequivocal command of their Lord.

In many respects the last decades of the eighteenth century present noteworthy analogies to that time when the Lord Himself, the Almighty Christ, could do no mighty works among His own people because of their unbelief, and when He

could only heal a few sick folk amongst them. There never was a time when some were not being healed, but the general state of the Church was almost incredible in its torpor and death. It is, indeed, somewhat difficult for us in happier times to realise how terrible was the condition of things on the eve of the new Pentecost, so much has the outcome of it changed the whole appearance of the world and the Church alike. But the testimony borne to the reign of deepest and almost unbroken darkness is overwhelming.

The eminent lawyer Blackstone, writing in 1780, says that on his removal to London from Oxford he sought out every outstanding preacher in the metropolis, and this is his report of what he found: "I did not hear a single discourse that had more of Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero. I never could discover from what I heard whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, or of Mohammed, or of Christ."

Hannah More, too, gives us a vivid glimpse of the state of affairs when she tells that on one occasion she "saw but one Bible in the parish of Cheddar, and that was used to prop a flower-pot." And even she was somewhat under the influence of the upas tree, for in her plea for elementary education she confined the curriculum to the Bible and the Catechism and "such books as may fit the

children for servants. I allow of no writing for the poor."

"There is a general decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men," wrote Isaac Watts; and among the peasantry, at least in England, there seems to have been no moral or religious training of any kind. Nor were their "betters" in any way superior, as may be gathered from the reply of the Duchess of Buckingham to Lady Huntingdon, who had asked her to go with her to hear Whitefield. "I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive, and are strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and to do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and breeding."

As for the almost universal indifference or opposition to Foreign Missions, the Bishop of St. David's, who questioned the right of one people to send their religion to any other, may be taken to represent the feeling of the Establishment in England; while the reception which William Carey got from his colleagues in the Baptist

ministry may be taken as indicative of the attitude of the Nonconformists. Tradition has it that when once he was urging his fellow-Christians to discuss the matter of Missions to the heathen, he was met with the response: "Young man, sit down. When God wishes to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine"; which was, of course, just what God was not prepared to do. God alone can save the world, but God does not save the world alone.

As it has been with all truly spiritual movements, the Evangelical Revival began quietly and without observation of men. There had been preparation both positive and negative, and above all there had been prayer. It is true that some of those who prayed hardly knew what they were praying for, and did not recognise the answer when it came, but that has always been the case. But again and again during these dreary years in that waste century of rationalism and indifference we come across appeals for union in prayer, and better still, response to the appeals.

In the year 1723, a Presbyterian minister in Paisley, for instance, published a *History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism*, in which he powerfully urged prayer as the first of nine means which he enumerated for the conversion of the heathen. We read that

from 1744 to 1746 prayer that God's Kingdom might come was offered by many all over Great Britain, every Saturday evening and Sabbath morning; and that those who joined in the circle of prayer were so much encouraged that in August, 1746, they sent a memorial to Boston inviting the Christians of North America to join with them in it for the next seven years.

Then again, in 1784, we find the Baptist ministers of Northamptonshire agreeing to wrestle with God for the effusion of His Holy Spirit, that there might be a revival of the churches and the general cause of the Redeemer. They unanimously agreed to exhort all the congregations to engage heartily and perseveringly in prayer to God on the first Monday of each month, and at the same hour. They called on them specially to pray for the spread of the Gospel to the distant parts of the habitable globe, and to do what they could to get other societies and denominations to join with them in their praying. That they were not always loyal to the logic of their intercessions, and often failed to see what was involved in such prayers, is not to be wondered at. In any case, their lack of insight and response has unhappily been far from unique in the history of the Church in prayer, and they had not yet realised how serious a thing it is to wait on God in such a

fashion, or to how much they were thereby committing themselves.

In addition to prayer in concert and alone with God, it would appear that, also without observation of men, there had been quite an unwonted circulation of writings about the Holy Spirit and His work. Such a notable book, for instance, as Marshall's *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, which has been described as "Keswick doctrine for hard heads," was among the books which were called for and read widely, with the most blessed results. But after we have done our best to trace the revival back to its sources, all we can say with certainty is that the Breath of God began to breathe, and that ere long there was a great army of living souls where before there had been nothing more than the grim *disjecta membra* of the battlefield, a weird valley of dry bones, bones very many and very dry. To seek to discover whether the revival or the Missionary outbreak came first would be a vain task which has not even an academic interest. To ask this question is like asking whether the egg or the hen is first; for in a very real sense these movements were not two, but only one.

All the same, there can be but little doubt that it was the prompt obedience to the Divine command shown in the new Missionary enterprise

that did most to deepen the revival when it had come, and to make it permanent. If it be claimed, as it well may, that it was the revival in turn which made such obedience possible at all, that just means that once more we are in presence of one of those blessed circles of grace which, equally with vicious circles of unbelief, are so often to be met with in the records of the Church.

In his *Short History of the English People*, Mr. Green says that it was not till the Wesleyan movement had done its work that the philanthropic movement began; and probably we are on lines at once safe and scientific when we treat the Methodist movement, which, with all its collateral outgoings, was one of the few glories of an inglorious age, as the beginning of the still greater revival which was to follow and make all things new. It prepared the soil in which there grew up the choice plants of Mission work at home and abroad, of world-wide philanthropy and Gospel effort in an outburst which has only once been equalled in the history of the race. For then, as always, when it is not perverted, the true love of God went hand in hand with the true love of men; for we only know that we love God Whom we have not seen when we love our brethren whom we have seen.

To quote Mr. Green again: "The passionate

impulse of human sympathy with the wronged and afflicted raised hospitals, endowed charities, built churches, sent Missionaries to the heathen, supported Burke in his plea for the Hindu, and Clarkson and Wilberforce in their crusade against the iniquities of the slave trade." And thus it was that when men were obedient to the will of God, the clouds broke and showers fell where there had only been drops before. They who do the will of God shall know of the doctrine; and they who hear the cry of the perishing abroad hear the voice of the self-revealing Jehovah at home.

The state of affairs in the various English churches on the eve of the Evangelical Revival was somewhat as follows. When John Wesley died, in 1791, the Methodists had 294 preachers, and nearly 72,000 members in the United Kingdom; in addition to some 50,000 more in other lands, who had been gathered in in loyalty to Wesley's claim that the world was his parish. In the English Establishment there had also been a quickening; and an Evangelical party had been formed, well-known men like Romaine, Venn, John Newton, Thomas Scott, and William Wilberforce being among its leaders. Charles Wesley remained in communion with the Church of England to the last; and by the end of the century these Evangelicals were a numerous and compact body, not

without influence. The older English Nonconformists, too, had felt the breath of revival. Earlier in the century they had had Evangelical leaders like Watts and Doddridge; while later there were leaders like Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall.

In Home Mission work and philanthropy there were many signs of an unwonted stir, as if already the river had been caught in the swirl of the Niagara which was now so near. In 1781 Robert Raikes began the great work of Sabbath-schools. At the World Conference held in Rome, in 1907, it was reported that there were then nearly 250,000 Sabbath-schools throughout the world, with 25,500,000 teachers and scholars. In 1773, John Howard began his epoch-making work of prison reform; and although he died at his post far away on the shores of the Black Sea, only seventeen years later, while attending a girl sick of the jail fever, the most beneficent results still flow from what he did so nobly. Later on his work was taken up by Elizabeth Gurney Fry and a devoted band of women and men, an unusual proportion of whom were Quakers, a people whose record in connection with such philanthropy is so remarkable.

During this spring-time, too, the work of reforming the criminal law was begun by Sir

Samuel Romilly and carried on by Sir James Mackintosh. Even war, that monstrous evil, felt the healing touch of the Son of Man; for in 1795 the work of the Geneva Convention was anticipated in part by the establishment of an ambulance by a Frenchman.

As for slavery, that sum of all villainies and all wrongs, reform came with a glorious rush, which culminated, in 1833, in what John Stuart Mill declared was the most righteous act ever done by a nation—when Great Britain paid £20,000,000 for the redemption of her slaves in the West Indies. Good men had been denouncing the vile system since the beginning of the eighteenth century; but nothing is more remarkable in connection with moral movements than their slow growth up to a certain point, unless it be the progress which comes with a rush when nations are born in a day. The blindness of good people to clear moral issues, before the time comes when the day breaks and the shadows flee away, is very puzzling. In 1747, for example, no less a man than George Whitefield expended £300, which the people of Charleston had given him, in buying land and negroes; and by his will he bequeathed not only his orphan homes but his negro slaves to the Countess of Huntingdon, for the same purposes as he himself held them.

The first concerted action for the abolition of the slave trade—the abolition of slavery itself was not yet thought of—was made by the Quakers, who in 1761 agreed to exclude from their Society all who took part in it. In the year 1772, through the efforts of Granville Sharp, a decision was obtained from Lord Mansfield that no slave could be held in England, or carried out of it. And then, at last, the beginning of the end came, when the iniquitous traffic was prohibited by Denmark in 1802, by Great Britain in 1807, and by the United States in 1808. Slavery itself, however, was not abolished in the British Empire till 1833; and it only came to an end in the United States of America some forty-five years ago, after a bloody war. But the Evangelical Revival sealed its fate, even as the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper doomed it throughout the Empire of Rome in the first centuries of our era.

In the history of human progress, and the contribution of the Gospel thereto, the Evangelical Revival ranks with the early Christian centuries and with the Reformation era; and just as the Reformation came when the New World was being opened up, and when the Renaissance in letters, the invention of the printing press, and the discovery of the new continent of the West

were uniting to make everything new; so the Evangelical Revival came amid the upheavals of the French Revolution which remade Europe, and when the nations were stirred to the depths by the great social and industrial changes consequent on the invention of the steam-engine, even yet the most wonderful instrument which human industry has had put at its command.

To bring out the inwardness of this period of unexampled expansion in things material and spiritual alike, these dates regarding trade may be added to those already given about religion: Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations* in 1774; the spinning machine was invented in 1768; the spinning jenny in 1764; and the spinning mule in 1776. Even as the Reformation consecrated and claimed the printing press, the Evangelical Revival did much to consecrate the new mechanical appliances which had just been put at the service of man. It also did something to mitigate the misery which was one result of the long wars and the vast industrial changes. To some extent it was more successful than the Reformation era in facing its social problems. For the picture of the time when this revival came is far from complete, unless it be realised that it found enormous social distress prevailing; that sheer hunger was everywhere common

among the poor; and that the public life of the community was very corrupt. It was into this maelstrom of striving, sinning, suffering men and women that the healing salt of genuine religious quickening was thrown; and since then, with many an ebb and flow, things have never quite lost the regenerating impulse which they then received.

Now that we have seen something of the environment of this new era of the Spirit, we may look more definitely at what was being done in the realm of Foreign Mission work; and it soon becomes clear that the river of God was running there, not only deep and broad, but swift as well. As we saw, it was in May, 1792, that the Baptist Missionary Society was formed by the men whom William Carey had been teaching to expect great things from God, and to attempt great things for God. But even before that the Basel Society for Spreading Christian Truth, out of which emerged the Basel Bible Society and the Basel Missionary Society, had been founded in 1780. Then in 1795, only three years after the Baptists had shown the way, the London Missionary Society was formed by a union of Independents, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians. Their only strife was to be this—"not to promote the interests of a special section, since Christ is not divided; but with united

earnestness to make known afar the glory of His Person, the perfection of His Work, the wonders of His Grace, and the overflowing blessings of His Redemption."

It has been truly said that the Church realises her unity in her sacred songs; but it is also true that she likewise realises it in her efforts to bring the light to those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Although the shadow of separation still lies on her, and hinders her greatly, that union for Foreign Mission work more than a century ago was a sure prophecy, not only of the brighter day which is to come, but also of the direction from which it is most likely to come. Already, in India and elsewhere, churches which are still separate at home have come together at the front, where they are face to face with the foe, and have found out that no excuse is ever needed for union, but only for separation. That prophecy, too, was none the less real that as the other churches have gradually formed their own special organisations, the London Missionary Society has necessarily become practically the Society of the Independents or Congregationalists alone.

In 1799 another big step was taken, when sixteen ministers of the Church of England, encouraged by Wilberforce, the great anti-

slavery champion, and others like-minded, founded the organisation which, in 1812, became the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, and which has had such a splendid career ever since. Then, in 1808, the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews was formed; while, in 1813, the Wesleyan Missionary Society was added to the number of active agencies. Nor were the Presbyterians far behind, if at all, in spite of the notorious finding of the Scottish General Assembly, in 1796. In that very year the Scottish and Glasgow Missionary Societies were founded, and went on their way rejoicing; until they were merged later on in the organisations of the churches, when these laggards at last overtook the more daring of their members.

Already, too, there were two auxiliary Societies in existence which were destined to play a very important part in winning the world for Christ, and to be the most valued allies and handmaidens of every Evangelical Mission. These were the Religious Tract Society, founded in 1799, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, which began its beneficent career in 1804. There are now more than eighty Bible Societies at work in the homelands and among the heathen; and in the year 1909, the British and Foreign Bible

Society alone circulated nearly 6,000,000 copies of the Bible, in whole or in part, in 409 languages; while Dr. Dennis computes that when the twentieth century began no fewer than 436 of the peoples and tribes of mankind had the Word of the Living God provided for them in their mother tongue.

It is not easy to realise how much work of the noblest sort all this has involved; nor is there any kind of service in the foreign field which deserves our admiration more than the self-effacement of those Missionaries who spend years in preparing grammars, dictionaries and translations, when their whole soul is on fire for other forms of work which seem more immediate and active. But the work which is done in this way multiplies indefinitely the influence of every other worker who goes out with the Bible in his hand, and adds years to the life of usefulness of those who enter into the labours of the grammar and dictionary maker.

There are no truer Missionary Societies than the Bible Societies, and the societies for providing literature in the vernacular; and all the friends of the Gospel rejoice in their wonderful activity and their perennial youth. Nor is it adequately known or understood how much the Church and the Foreign Mission cause owe to the consecration

of scholars of the first rank who have given their years to this work of translation.

Dr. Wright, who spoke with such authority on the subject, has well said: "Let none despise the uneducated Missionaries who go forth with hearts full of love to tell the simple story of Jesus of Nazareth to the common people who hear them gladly. But there is cause for joy in the Church of Christ when our polished scholars go forth to the heathen. If on arriving they find a poor translation, then, like Bishop Steere of the Universities' Mission, they make a better. If there is no translation, like Mr. Batchelor of the Church Missionary Society among the Ainu, they make one. If the translation is very good, but ought to be better, like Mr. Cousins of the London Missionary Society and his colleagues in Madagascar, they revise and perfect it. Where there is no written language, like the Presbyterian Missionaries in the New Hebrides, or Mr. Calvert of Fiji, they catch the sounds from the lips of the people, and fix the winged words in permanent forms. They pluck the flowerets of savage speech and weave them into chaplets for the King of kings. All the scholarly Missionaries of the different Missions become philologists in the service of the Bible Society, in the service of God, and hence the ratio of progress in translation

and revision." The various Bible Societies are now putting as many copies of the Scriptures into circulation every year as were in all the world when the Evangelical Revival began.

Nor must it be overlooked that while this Evangelical Revival showed its power mainly among the English-speaking peoples, it brought blessing also to the continent of Europe, although it came there later and with diminished force. In 1836, Fliedner founded the Institute of Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth, which has become the pride of the Evangelicals in the Fatherland; and the Dresden Society has also done much to guide and develop the work of the Lutheran churches among the heathen. The Swedish Mission to the Lapps, one of the solitary Foreign Missions of the Reformation period, was resumed in 1825. Hahn of Livonia is the apostle of the Hereros. Gutzlaff of Pomerania occupies a high place among the first Missionaries to China. The Rhenish Mission which went to Borneo in 1835 did good work among the heathen Dyaks. Dutch Missionaries, too, have long been busy in Java.

As for the doings of the American churches and Mission Societies, they would require chapters for themselves. Their operations in the Turkish Empire, begun in 1831, are one instance out of many of work done which, because of its ex-

ceeding value, will never be forgotten by those who admire consecrated efficiency. The wondrous and almost bloodless revolution which has recently transformed the whole outlook in the Near East is but one of the many striking testimonies to the immense influence for good of their Robert College with all its related agencies. Even when nations are born in a day, the preparatory work is often long and arduous, as it was in this case; and Turkey is a most unexpected encouragement to all faithful workers, and not least to those who have to face the unique discouragements incident to the conflict in Mohammedan countries. How quickly everything changes when the sun comes out!

Such, then, are some of the main features of the unexampled Missionary revival with which the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth century began. It is not easy for us to realise nowadays that it is hardly a century since Dr. Chalmers, the great Evangelical leader of the Scots, published those memorable sermons of his in which he pleaded for Missionary enterprise in Scotland; that it is little more than a hundred years since the Church Missionary Society sent forth its first representative to West Africa, its earliest agents being Germans; or that the first Missionary in modern times to China, the ever-famous Robert

Morrison, only reached Canton in September 1807, to begin that assault on the mighty Empire which is now so full of promise. Even then he only began the study of the language with a view to attempting the translation of the Scriptures into Chinese.

Yet these are the facts of the situation; and when we think of what was the state of affairs then, and of what has since been accomplished, in spite of all the disappointments and drawbacks, we can only cry out in gratitude and wonder, What hath God wrought! In their impatience and short-sightedness men sometimes express surprise that so little progress has been made and so little fruit gathered in, when there are so many thousands of devoted workers busy in every clime. Some even join in these expressions of surprise who themselves are sharing in the "arrested progress" which is bewildering and saddening so many in the homelands. But when we remember the unbroken darkness which reigned until our own time in many of the heathen lands, and all the imperfections of the work even where it has been done best—its fragmentariness and lack of continuity; its divisions even at the front and on the battlefield in presence of the King's foes; and all the hindrances which have had to be overcome, and are not wholly overcome

yet; the hostility of the carnal heart to the evangelical doctrines; and the unbelief and wickedness of some who represent Christendom in government and trade—our wonder might rather be that so much has been accomplished.

There are nations which are now sending out Missionaries themselves who far less than a century ago had never heard of the Saviour Christ. Multitudes are now faithful believers who were born in unbroken heathenism, many who themselves were once revilers and persecutors. And there are not a few earnest waiters on God who live and labour in the belief that, even if they themselves are not spared to see the Gospel preached to all mankind, and the Kingdom come, some now alive will yet share in the glory of the crowning day. Some, too, of those who are most patient are also among the eager; and even while they remember that it took three centuries to win the Empire, and eleven centuries to win the Barbarians throughout Europe, and that neither of these victories was quite complete at that, they cannot but recall also that the Church has only too often limited the Holy One of Israel, and that in this dispensation of the Spirit believers in the Risen Christ ought to see greater things than these.

Christian optimism about Missions does not

mean forgetting the difficulties which have to be faced, any more than it means blindness to the fact that, as there have been failures in the past, there may be failures in the future; but it does mean remembering that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, and that His heart yearns over all the sinning and suffering, that they may find their all in Him. There may be too much impatience of a sort, but there may also be too much patience of a sort; the patience of those who are altogether lacking in the zeal of God's house, and who cry to the Lord for help when He is crying to them to go forward; and who profess to be waiting for God, when all the while He is waiting for them.

There are some Christian workers who are very much afraid of excitement. But there was excitement when Jesus was here on the earth, and men saw things they had never seen before. There was excitement in the time of the Reformation Revival, and in the time of the Evangelical Revival, when God was renewing the face of the earth; and there will be excitement again when the whole Church of Christ rises up to serve in obedience to the command to make disciples of all nations, and realises that every such command is a promise of power to those who are willing to obey.

Just because it was such a deep spiritual move-

ment, it is not possible to detail the history of the Evangelical Revival, or to trace all its blessed fruits. We are not able to say, "Lo, God is here," or "Lo, God is there," as the light was diffused and one after another came under the mighty power of the Holy Ghost. But there are two fine instances of how the fire spread which may be narrated as serving to show what was going on in numberless lives. They are both taken from the history of the movement in Scotland, but even so they bring us into touch with two of the outstanding leaders in the English movement as well. The best *entente cordiale* is always that which gathers round the spread of the Gospel, and the most enduring unity is that which is evidenced there.

In all the history of Scotland since the days of John Knox and Alexander Henderson, there has been no figure more massive, nor any character more fruitful, than that of Thomas Chalmers, whose reputation as a preacher and philosopher, as a theologian and social economist, as a churchman and a statesman, spread far beyond the narrow confines of Caledonia; and the story of his conversion tells how the tide turned, not only in his life but in the life of the nation as well. The history of any movement is but the history of the individual soul writ large. William

Wallace made Scotland a nation. John Knox made her reformed and free. Thomas Chalmers brought her into the full stream of the river of blessing which flowed from the Evangelical Revival, and had worked such wonders in the South, turning the wilderness into the garden of the Lord.

On the other hand, one of the most striking and attractive figures among the Evangelical leaders in England in that era of grace was William Wilberforce. After her first conversation with him, Madame de Staël said: "I have always heard that Mr. Wilberforce was the most religious man in England; but I did not know that he was also the wittiest." He was born in the year 1759; and his circumstances and gifts were such that soon after he came of age he was elected to Parliament; he retired from the House of Commons in old age after forty-five years of active service. He was rich, witty, and fond of society; but when he was only twenty-six years of age, and in the full enjoyment of all the gaieties of the time, he was converted to God. This change took place partly through his study of Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, but mainly through his study of the New Testament in the original Greek.

From that time onward his life had a new bent, and all his energies, gifts, and opportunities were

diverted into a new channel. In every sphere of public and private life he became the champion and the friend of the growing Evangelical party, and at the same time did much to guide the movement along sane and helpful lines. For one thing, he saved it from being in any sense a clerical movement; and it was due to him more than to any other that Great Britain abolished the slave trade in the year 1807. Not only so; but just three days before his death, in 1833, he had the joy of knowing that slavery itself had followed the slave trade, and had been abolished all through the wide domains of the British Empire. Like Simeon, he could say: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

His life-work was such a rounded whole as few lives are permitted to be. In the year 1797 he published an epoch-making volume entitled, *A Practical View of the Prevailing System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity.* Five editions of it were sold within six months, which meant vastly more then than it would mean now with our enormous reading public. Nor is it possible to overestimate the good that book did all over the land, and especially among the well-to-do classes. It is not possible to go far in the records of the time without meeting

it or finding testimony to its unique and unparalleled influence.

And now our Scotsman and our Englishman meet. Among those who read Wilberforce's book was Thomas Chalmers. In the hands of the Almighty Spirit it proved to be the torch which was to set his great soul on fire, and through him to shine into so many Scottish homes and hearts; and through them into the regions beyond, with the light of the wondrous compassion and pity of the saving grace of God. Chalmers was thirty-one years of age at the time, and had just been struck down by a serious illness in the midst of his labours, being brought to the very gates of death. In the quiet hours of his convalescence he read Wilberforce, and passed from death to life, and from a learned and respectable Moderatism to a living faith in a living Lord. Never was the great change greater or more thoroughgoing. All his marvellous gifts were now consecrated to the service of his Master; and from that time till he fell on sleep, thirty-six years later, Thomas Chalmers spent himself for God, and the whole nation responded marvellously to the mighty appeal.

Thus it was that the Evangelical Revival came in power to Scotland, and what had only been local and sporadic before became national through

this man's conversion. Nor was it in Home Mission work and philanthropy alone that Chalmers made his influence felt, after such a fashion that Scotland still retains the impress of his work. That was no longer the spirit of the Church or of such as were being saved; and of necessity he turned his attention to the needs of the heathen and to the appeal of the perishing. In two famous sermons he directed the attention of the nation to this subject, first of all in 1812 and then in 1814. Through these, followed up as they were by personal contact later on, he kindled a yearning in the heart of Alexander Duff which ultimately took that truly apostolic Missionary to India, as the first accredited agent of the Scottish Church in the foreign field—yea, be it added, as the first accredited agent of any Home church, as a church. And thus England and Scotland and the Empire, the statesman, the theologian, and the Missionary, were bound together in gracious ties. Thus also were the ties between the work at home and the work abroad once more made manifest.

But Dr. Duff's name brings us to the other illustrative example referred to as to how the Gospel light was spreading in these wondrous formative days, from heart to heart and from land to land. In the year 1796 Charles Simeon, who was so splendidly occupying the pulpit of Trinity

Church, Cambridge, and kindling there a fire which was never to go out, and the same who had secured entrance into India for the five chaplain-Missionaries, made a tour in Scotland in company with James Haldane the evangelist, who had intended to be a Missionary, but who for the greater glory of God had been kept at home to serve in Scotland and to carry the Evangelical Revival to the far North—as far, indeed, as the Shetland Islands. For as John Newton once asked: "Why should not the Orkney and Shetland Islands deserve attention as much as the Islands of the South Seas?" When the travellers were at Dunkeld, in the Perthshire Highlands, Simeon had arranged to drive to the famous Pass of Killiecrankie, intending thereafter to hurry back to Glasgow.

But man proposes, and God disposes; like the Apostle of the Gentiles in Galatia, Simeon "felt poorly," and had to postpone his flight. As one result of this, he paid a visit to Moulin, some four miles from the Pass, to see the minister of the parish, Mr. Stewart by name. The outcome of this intercourse was that Mr. Stewart "changed the strain of his preaching, determining to know nothing among his people but Christ and Him crucified." Later on he became minister at Dingwall in Rossshire, and then in the Canongate of Edinburgh; and in both of these places, as at Moulin after

his great resolve, he was a living force for the salvation of the souls of men and women: and, long after, Simeon blessed God for the happy indisposition which sent him to Moulin in spite of his plans.

Before Mr. Stewart brought his ministry in Perthshire to a close, among those who came under the power of the Gospel through his regenerated ministry were two of his young folks, who were ultimately to become husband and wife, and to whom as such the future Missionary Alexander Duff was born on 25th April, 1806—a great gift of God to them and the Church. Thus did the healing waters of the grace of God flow through Simeon and Stewart and that Highland father and mother, all the way from Cambridge, to the lad growing up in his far-off Perthshire home, and through him to multitudes still farther off in Bengal and Hindustan. Truly the river of God is full of water. Nor would we forget the share Chalmers and Wilberforce had in sending Duff to India; for when the lad went as a student to St. Andrews, he came under the spell of the great preacher, who was now a professor in the University there, and wielding a far-reaching influence for the evangel.

Nothing is more striking about the Evangelical Revival than the fashion in which all who shared in it were linked together in influences like these.

For the instances given are only a few out of many proofs which this blessed time of renaissance and reformation affords of the truth that our world is very small; that from the Christian view-point it must be looked at as one and indivisible; and that the whole round earth is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God. While, for example, Duff was still a student at St. Andrews, he met Dr. Marshman, who was home from Serampore, and full of the gracious work which Carey and he were doing there. Duff was also brought into contact with Dr. Morrison, the pioneer of Missionaries to China, who had come home to tell about the work in Canton, and to interest the churches in the teeming millions of the Flowery Land. And besides all this, in Duff's making as a Missionary there was the growing influence of Chalmers himself, of whom he spoke in 1847 as "the leading Missionary spirit in Christendom."

Thus Cambridge and St. Andrews, Moulin and Serampore, Canton and Calcutta, joined hands round one consecrated life at the summons of human need and of the great Divine provision which has been made for that need in Christ. And this was what that glorious spring-time which we call the Evangelical Revival was doing all over Christendom and far beyond; to let believers see that they were all one in Christ, and to make it

manifest that the seal of their unity must be the deliverance of those who were still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. "Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"

CHAPTER VIII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11. 9.

"A candle loses nothing by having another candle lighted at it."
—Hegel.

"And not by Eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly;
But Westward, look, the land is bright."

Clough.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE nineteenth century was in every respect, moral and spiritual, social and political, the greatest of all the centuries except the first; and even the first excels it only in the one outstanding fact that it saw Him come who is the Desire of all nations, and the Eternal. In the realm of Missions, it has been claimed for the nineteenth century that its crowning glory has been that it inscribed on its banner the command of the Lord to disciple all nations, and that the thought of consecrated service distinctively characterises its conception of the nature and aims of the Church. Many volumes would be required for the record of what was achieved throughout its years for the glory of God and the good of men, as it went forward in loyalty to this great ideal.

It must always be borne in mind that the rise of modern science, and the appearance and applications of modern inventions, made the difference

between the nineteenth century and even the eighteenth vastly greater than that between the eighteenth and the third, or the ninth, or any other. The difference was not so much in degree as in kind. Modern science may have been unfriendly to the supernatural in some respects, partly because that has been sadly misunderstood; but in many other respects it has been the willing handmaiden and ally of the Gospel, and has come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

The first steamer which spanned the Atlantic was the *Savannah*, which crossed in the year 1819, and took twenty-five days to do so. It was not for five years after that that a steamer went from England to India. The first railway over which goods and passengers were carried by a locomotive engine was not opened till 1825; and the electric telegraph was not made use of in Britain until the year of the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne. That meant that Constantine, the Roman general; William of Orange, the deliverer; and Charles James Fox, the statesman and orator, all travelled from the Continent to England in very much the same fashion; and that the fashion by which either Abraham or Isaiah would have had to travel had they wished to do so—that is, by the aid of the wind or of oars, and with no other mechanical aids whatsoever. It means, too, that

men waited for the news of Waterloo very much as their predecessors had waited for news of Marathon or Bannockburn. They had all the help that horses and sails and signals could render them; but they knew nothing of the electric telegraph at the latest of these battles any more than at the first. As for wireless telegraphy, with its accumulation of marvels, or dirigible aeroplanes, we ourselves have not yet become accustomed to them. But it is easy to forget that so much which is commonplace now, and in everyday use, was as unknown to John Wesley and George the Third as it was to Justin Martyr or Julius Cæsar.

For us the supreme significance of all this is, that all these aids to intercommunication among the nations came for the first time when the Evangelical Revival was still moving men everywhere to show that they loved God Whom they had not seen by their love for the brethren whom they had seen. They were like another gift of tongues for the new era; and they came at the very time when they could be harnessed to the Gospel chariot, and used by those eager to tell all the world of their Redeemer and what He had done for them. These changes made the world one and indivisible after a new sort, and enabled Mission work to be carried on with a new kind of efficiency; and as one result of their operation, the nineteenth

century saw barriers between the nations everywhere broken down in the most marvellous way. The nineteenth century, like the first, could say: "We never saw it after this fashion."

There were also vast social and political changes which opened up the hermit nations of the Far East to the influences of the West. A century ago, China, Korea and Japan were all either unknown or altogether closed against the Gospel. Australasia, too, with all its vast promise and power in the Southern Seas, was still inhabited by unknown savages; while Africa, with the exception of Egypt and the Cape of Good Hope, was so much a *terra incognita* that it was believed to be mainly desert. The nineteenth century saw the world at one and the same time grow vastly larger and vastly smaller than it had been before; and it is more than remarkable that, just as the revival in the sixteenth century came when the printing press was beginning its wondrous career, the revival in the nineteenth century came when the steam-engine had just become the stupendous servant of man. Who can tell whether the aeroplane may not be as marvellously allied with the new era into which we are entering now, and be as graciously allied with another revival, another world-wide quickening from on high?

When the nineteenth century began, all Europe

was shaken to its very foundations by the Revolution in France, which sealed the death-warrant of the old despotism and absolutism not only in France but everywhere. The new century, with all its travail and sorrow, began with a fresh sense of hope and expansion, and with a new sense of the rights of men as well as of their duties and responsibilities. As it has been well put, the same new enthusiasm of humanity which gave birth to the theories of the "social contract," and inspired the Marseillaise, sent Elizabeth Fry to her work in the prisons and William Wilberforce to his life's work for the slaves, just as it sent Carey to India and Moffat to South Africa.

No great remedial movement, and least of all that which issued in the Foreign Mission enterprise, can be understood if it be not looked at in its place in the great world-struggle for liberty, and light, and God. The Lord our God is One Lord; and when the Spirit is at work among men as He was then, He ever impresses His seal of unity on the doings of those who are obedient to His will.

"Careless seems the great Avenger; History's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the Throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the Future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the Shadow, keeping watch above His own."

The statisticians say that whereas in the year 1800 there was a Christian population throughout the world of only 200,000,000, there was a similar population of 500,000,000 in the year 1900; and if this be little more than a surmise, the fact remains that at the beginning of the twentieth century, for every square mile of the earth's surface governed by non-Christian peoples, four miles were under Christian rule, or eighty-two per cent. of the whole. Yet in his conceit and ignorance Voltaire prophesied that before the nineteenth century had begun Christianity would have vanished from the earth.

The value of such estimates, and even of such facts, is, however, only comparative and relative. Even when we endeavour to arrive at actual figures as to the sum total of the agents, resources, and achievements of the various Missionary organisations, it is not easy to get at the facts; they are so complex, and are so often compiled from different standpoints. Yet there are some facts which can be ascertained which carry the most obvious lessons with them.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, for example, there were at most only half a dozen societies for work abroad, and these were nearly all just newly organised; whereas at the end of the century there were at least 300. There

are so many now, indeed, that it is not easy to keep an account of them all. Dr. Dennis, in the elaborate and valuable details which he compiled at the close of the century, says that if we include those which aid the work indirectly, there were then no fewer than 558 organisations at work in connection with Foreign Missions. During the century, too, the amount spent annually by the various organisations on this work rose from about £10,000 to £4,000,000; and in 1909 to £4,922,615. When the century began, there were about 50 Missionaries at work, all of them men. When it ended, there were 6600 men and 4000 women; or, if the wives of the Missionaries be included, as most of them ought to be, there were some 14,000 men and women at work in the foreign field.

Of even greater significance, if that be possible, is the fact that during the century the number of native ministers rose from none to 4000; and of other native helpers from 80 only to 78,000. When this wonderful century came to an end, there were 1,500,000 native communicants, as compared with 7000 when it began; while the catechumens had increased from 5000 to 4,500,000. According to Dr. Dennis, indeed, these figures are too modest, inspiring as they are. He adds, too, that when the century ended some portion of the Scriptures had been translated into no fewer than

436 tongues or dialects. But figures apart, it is abundantly manifest that the progress during this unique and gracious century was altogether extraordinary. Some of the incidents of the progress make that even more vivid and impressive than any array of statistics could do.

And here the difficulty is to know where to begin and where to end, the embarrassment of riches is so great. In Sierra Leone, for example, where Mission work did not begin until the year of Waterloo, there is now a self-supporting, self-governing, self-extending church, and seven out of every eight of the inhabitants are professing Christians. Bishop Tucker baptized his first convert in Toro, in Central Africa, as recently as 1896, and less than twelve years later there were nearly 3000 professing Christians in the region, and nearly half of that number had become communicants. In Uganda, in the five years preceding 1909 as many as 35,000 people were baptized, the greater number of them being adult converts from heathenism.

During his visit to that territory, in the year 1907, the Right Hon. Winston Churchill was so deeply impressed—as was Mr. Roosevelt, who visited the same region in 1909—by what he saw of the wondrous change which had been wrought, and the wonderful moral triumphs which had been won by

the Gospel, that he has borne the most emphatic testimony to the value of the work done by the Missionaries. He found that a great Christian nation had been born in the very heart of the Dark Continent. He most emphatically declares that nothing makes for peace and progress, and for the removal of the great open sores under which Africa groans, like the work and influence of the Missionaries. When he opened the Orient Exhibition in London, he quoted with approval the testimony of Sir George Le Hunte, who spoke with even greater authority than that of a mere traveller in Africa. Speaking of New Guinea, he said: "The Government owe everything to the Missions. I wish I could make you fully realise what Missions mean to the Administration. It would have to be doubled, perhaps quadrupled, in strength if it were not for the little whitewashed houses along the coast where the Missionaries live. So every penny contributed to these Missions is a help to the King's Government, every penny spent on Missionaries saves a pound to the Administration; for the Missions bring peace, and law, and order."

What a change from what was once the official attitude, to find a Governor of a British territory making such a statement; and to find it taken up and made his own by a Cabinet Minister, because

of what he himself has seen. It seems as if it were but yesterday that the authorities both at home and abroad were inclined to look on Missionaries with suspicion and dislike, and as potential disturbers of the peace; or since Missions were made the butt of many silly and insolent jokes and of much impertinence. And it is the light which has scattered the darkness.

The testimony as to Uganda can be paralleled from many another Mission field. After fifty years of labour in the Sandwich Islands, the group has not only ceased to be ranked among Foreign Mission districts, but has taken its place among the Christian communities. In the Fiji Islands work began in 1835; and only half a century later thirteen churches could be counted, and it could be claimed that in no part of Scotland were there fewer homes without family worship. Yet confessedly the aboriginal savages in Fiji stood unrivalled as a disgrace to mankind; and as a proof of the depths to which paganism can sink a community. Crime seemed to be inwrought in the very soul of the people. The grossest vices polluted every hearth, gave force to every social and political institution, and turned religious worship into orgies of surpassing horror.

Less than a century ago, Henry Martyn, having made but one Moslem convert in the course of his

brief but bright career, declared the conversion of a Hindu to be a miracle as stupendous as raising the dead. Yet now not only are there 1,000,000 members in the Indian churches, with many Hindus among them; but for the last fifty years the progress in the membership in these native churches has represented fifty per cent. for each decade. If there were growth like that in the Home churches, what a change would be wrought, and how little we would hear about arrested development, or another ice-age! The conversion of the Karen people in Burma is one of the most encouraging stories in all these glorious records. They accepted Christ *en masse*, and are now a Christian nation, with a church in nearly every village, in which Karen pastors supported by the people minister to Christ-loving flocks.

Nor is the story of China one whit less wonderful—it is even more wonderful, if that be possible. The first Missionary for Christ in modern times entered that vast Empire in 1807, after the nineteenth century was well begun; and as late as 1842 there were only six Missionaries among so many. In 1853, there were still only 52. Even in 1870, although there had been a notable increase, there were still only 262 among all the teeming millions. And such as they were, these were all on the nine seaboard provinces of Eastern

China; and the nine inland provinces, with a population estimated at 150,000,000, were still utterly untouched. But since 1880 there has been an extraordinary expansion; so that in 1900, including the wives of Missionaries, there was an army of 2800 Protestant Missionaries at work. It is estimated, too, that when the present century began the number of converts in connection with the Protestant Missions was 100,000, as against 13,000 only twenty-two years before. And although in that same year, 1900, the sky was darkened and the whole outlook changed by the unhappy Boxer rising and massacres, the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church.

Since 1908, a veritable year of grace, the tidings from Manchuria, where that seed was so plentifully sown, have told of something very like another Pentecost in that much-enduring land. No one can say how far the tidal wave may spread. It may even touch the homelands in all their sorrowful impotence. We might call it the irony of God if the great revival for which the Church is everywhere longing, and which many are expecting to come soon, should come by way of the foreign field; but that would be in harmony with much else in history, and if only the awakening comes, it matters not how it comes, whether from the East or the West.

As for Japan, the truth there seems stranger than fiction, as it seeks to set forth what the nineteenth century has witnessed of the grace and might of God. For more than two centuries—from 1637, that is, when the Jesuits were finally driven out and all traces of their work had been swept away, till 1853, when her modern history began—Japan lay completely shut off from the rest of the world. Even after the treaties of 1854 it was as much shut off from the Gospel as before, and more determined than ever to remain a forbidden land. But God Himself invaded the hermit nation to which He seems to have assigned such pre-eminence in the Far East.

One day an English New Testament was found floating in the Bay of Yeddo, and this proved to be the good seed out of which the tree of modern Japanese Christianity was destined to grow. No one knew English, but an interpreter was found. Such was the interest which was evoked, that help for the right understanding of the Book was invited from Shanghai, and the good work was begun which was to result in making the Britain of the Eastern seas Christian as well as civilised. The first baptism took place in 1864; but the progress was still so slow that seven years later there were only ten baptized converts. The infant Church was, however, vital enough to invite

persecution and overcome it. As recently as 1868 —little more than forty years ago, that is—a decree newly issued against Christianity could be seen on the notice boards throughout the Empire; and until 1872, the "vile Jesus doctrine," as it was called, was prohibited by the law of the land, on pain of death. It was not till 1888 that the Japanese got the whole Bible in their own tongue.

In the year 1876, however, a big step was taken on the upward way, when the Christian Sabbath was made an official holiday by the Government; and in the following year the Missions of the American Presbyterians, who had been the first in the field, joined hands with the Missions of the other American Reformed churches, and the Scottish United Presbyterians, in forming the Union Church of Christ in Japan.

Since then there have been both ups and downs; the former being due to genuine revival and true growth, and the latter to the craving of the proud, and it may be conceited, Japanese to develop a native type of Christianity all their own. So far as their desire is a protest against carrying the peculiarities of Western Christianity into the Far East, it is altogether right and proper; but it has often meant more than that. It has sometimes meant a determination to build up a new system

which would not be Christian at all. All the same, Christianity is now a power in the land. There are Christian members in the Parliament of Japan; Christian judges in her courts; Christian professors in her colleges; Christian editors in charge of some of her leading newspapers; Christian officers, generals, and admirals in her army and navy.

At the close of the nineteenth century, it was estimated that there were in Japan some 40,000 Protestant converts, 25,000 belonging to the Greek Church, and 54,000 Roman Catholics. The Protestant Missions, it is said, have been most successful among the educated classes, and the Romish Missions most successful among the poor. Meanwhile, however, the forces of reaction are in the ascendant both among the masses and the classes; and the hardest battle which the Gospel has to fight is against the tide of national pride and independence which set in after the victory over Russia. Japan is now a great naval and military power, even if she is by no means so great as she imagines herself to be; and she is unwilling to bow any longer before anything in religion or government which has to be borrowed from the West. But the truth of God will vindicate itself as it has done before, as indigenous to the Orient as truly as to the Occident, and as the universal religion.

This reference to the Missions of the Church of Rome in Japan suggests a word here as to these Missions as a whole. It is not necessary to discuss their value at length; but it is necessary to note that during the nineteenth century they have attained vast dimensions. At the end of the century, a Paris Society, the largest Roman Catholic Society for Missions in the world, the Société des Missions Étrangers, had 34 bishops, 1100 Missionaries, 680 native priests, and a native following of nearly 1,250,000 all over Eastern Asia. At the same period, too, the Jesuits had 116 Missionaries in Europe, 233 in Africa, 988 in Asia, 550 in Oceania, 1246 in North America, and 856 in South America—or 3989 in all.

In 1895, the Propaganda returned the number of those in the heathen world who adhered to the Church of Rome as 3,606,000. And while it is impossible to rejoice in their work, it would be ungenerous to ignore the devotion and enterprise of many of the agents of Rome, whatever may be thought of those who send them. On the Congo, for example, in some ways they divide the honours with the Protestants; a band of Cardinal Lavigerie's white-robed Fathers having been at work in that benighted region since 1883. Even there, however, they have shown the cloven hoof in condoning the iniquities of the late King Leopold's agents against

the unanimous testimony of all other Missionaries, apparently for political reasons. Nor is it possible to forget that, whatever may be the zeal and ardour of her humbler agents, the motto of Rome as a system is *semper eadem*; and even although it may appear intolerant to say it, it is nevertheless cause for sincere regret that so many of those who are being called out of heathen darkness are getting their first impressions of Christ and His salvation through channels which have been defiled by pagan sacramentarianism and corrupt sacerdotalism.

This subject was fully discussed at the great Missionary Conference which was held in London in 1888; and the men who are most in love with Missions, and who know the truth at first hand, all spoke sorrowfully and solemnly of the objectionable methods and the baneful results of Roman Catholic Missions, as they had come into actual contact with them. Men of such varied experience and ecclesiastical connections as the late Dean Vahl of the Danish Evangelical Missionary Society, Rev. Henry Stout of the Reformed Church of America at work in Japan, Dr. Post of the Syrian Protestant College in Beyrout, Rev. J. A. B. Cook of the English Presbyterian Mission at Singapore, Rev. G. W. Clark of the China Inland Mission, Rev. H. Williams of the Church Missionary Society,

from Bengal, the late Dr. Murray Mitchell, and many others, had all the same sad tale to tell. They testified that Roman Catholic Missions often make use of unworthy and unjustifiable means; that they trust to catechisms, the crucifix, the adoration of angels, the Virgin, and the Host, as well as to the confessional, austere penances, and gorgeous ceremonial, rather than to the Gospel and the Word of God. In his *Missionary Achievement*, Dr. W. T. Whitley tells of "a Protestant visitor to South India twelve years ago who watched a Roman Catholic open-air service for twenty minutes under the impression that it was a gorgeous heathen function."

These witnesses showed conclusively that Scripture has a very small place in their propaganda. They also made it clear that when they are looked at over a wide enough expanse of years, the results of the different systems abundantly justify the confidence which the Evangelical Missionaries put on the power of the truth and of the Spirit of God, as well as on the influence of the holy lives of men and women who are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

In Canada, for example, only a small and feeble remnant is now left of the Romish Missions which have been in existence there for three centuries. So, also, there is now hardly anything to show for

three and a-half centuries of work in California, Mexico, and Central Africa. In South America, where there were once extensive Missions on the Orinoco, the Rio Negro, and the river Plate, all are practically gone. And it is so also with the early Romish efforts in India, China, and Japan. The Missionaries took to do with politics and trade, and were the tools of European powers seeking only for markets and territorial expansion; and they often incurred the contempt and hatred of those among whom they worked, instead of winning their affection and respect. Their boasted celibacy, too, with some advantages has had many drawbacks; and those who speak with authority say that one Christian Missionary home, with a Christian wife and family, does more to humanise, elevate, and evangelise a corrupt community than twenty celibate men.

And so, with every desire to be generous as well as just, we can but renew our expression of regret that any heathen nation should only know Christ as Rome proclaims Him, or should begin the Christian life by coming under the Romish yoke, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. "In noting the Missionary character of the Church," says Dr. Horton, "we must be careful to remember that it is essentially bound up with the ethical evangel. Nothing is more alien from Christ than

to proselytise with the effect of making men worse or leaving them as they were. Islam proselytises in the interests of Allah and his prophet. Christ seeks men only to save them, and His Church works in the same way. Christ does not seek His own glory, nor does the Church. But in her burns that love which is of God, the passion to save. The Church loses its intrinsic character if it ceases to be missionary; but still more does it lose its intrinsic character if it becomes proselytising. The effort to swell her numbers, to increase her dominion, to strengthen her authority, is a departure from her Lord. And if she adopts the tricks and wiles of the world in the enterprise, sacrificing humility, truth, justice, mercy, compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, scheming, intriguing, fighting in councils or on backstairs, endeavouring to conquer the world by the world's ways, to gain men as her subjects, rather than to save them, she loses the first note, the intrinsic quality which identifies her with the original society of Jesus. She may even become, like Rome herself, 'the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.'"

And now we may turn to some of the more outstanding and dominating facts and features of the Foreign Mission history of this nineteenth century, by way of seeking inspiration and guidance

for our own new era. It was a century of expansion, differentiation, and consolidation. It was a century of fresh outgoings and experiments, when work was done or attempted along many lines. In some cases the work has been done by Church Mission Boards and Committees directly responsible to those who appointed them. In other cases it has been done by Missionary Societies responsible only to their members and subscribers, and representing either more churches than one, or some special section in one great Church. There have also been cases in which the work was done by purely personal Missions, under no control of Church or Society, and able therefore to act freely; and doubtless there has been room and need for all the ways of it. Personal Missions have their obvious risks, inasmuch as there may be neither permanence nor continuity of policy; while Missions carried on by Societies have difficulties to face also when their converts must be organised into congregations and churches. But many of these dangers probably exist in theory rather than in practice; and where there is loyalty to the Spirit of God, He will guide those who are in the work to the appropriate organisation. And in that connection Church Missions may have their dangers too. There may be too great a desire to reproduce creeds and constitutions in Asia and Africa, which have grown

up in circumstances which are altogether different, and which have little meaning apart from their historical development.

Within recent years, however, there have been many examples of union and co-operation in the Foreign field ; and neither the Home Churches nor the Home Societies have shown any disposition to impress their own peculiarities on the young Christian communities which are springing up in the regions beyond. The only exceptions to this rule are to be found among those who are dominated by sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism. For, if we take the term in its wider acceptation, it is still true, both of the work at home and of the work abroad, that clericalism is the enemy.

It is very striking to find how much the deaths of prominent Missionaries have had to do with Missionary expansion in the nineteenth century. The Churches at home felt that they could never retreat from the lands in which they had become infeft by the burial of their dead. Two fine instances of this are the death of David Livingstone, at Ilala, in Central Africa, on 1st May, 1873, and the martyrdom of Bishop Hannington among the Masai, in October, 1885. Most of the Mission work now being carried on in Central Africa owes its origin to the spirit which was evoked by the story of Livingstone's death ; and it is undoubted

that the murder of Hannington also touched the heart and conscience of the homeland deeply and fruitfully.

The birth and boyhood of David Livingstone take us back to the time when Scotland was coming under the influence of the Evangelical Revival. The first of Chalmers's great Missionary sermons was preached the year before the future Missionary was born, in the year 1813; and the second the year after he was born. Livingstone was accepted by the London Missionary Society in 1830, and set out for Africa two years later. It is worth noting that he had set his heart on going to China, and was deeply disappointed that he had to go to the Dark Continent, with which his name and fame are now so inextricably bound up. In 1844 he married Mary Moffat, the daughter of Robert Moffat, the famous South African Missionary. From that time till his death, in 1873, he laboured for Christ with an unflinching and self-sacrificing energy and courage, which entitle him to rank among the great and strong who have been able single-handed to influence human progress and the advancement of human knowledge.

His body was brought home and laid with all honour in Westminster Abbey, amid tokens of mourning and admiration such as are accorded

only to the supremely great. Nor was that the best, for everywhere the claims of Africa were anew and impressively brought home to the Christian community as they had never been before; and since then enormous strides have been made, alike in the work he loved, and in the land for which he died. The great Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland, under Dr. Laws, which bears Livingstone's name, and in connection with which there has been continuous revival in recent years among the natives around Lake Nyassa, is only one of many of the fruits of his life and death.

As for Hannington, he is among the most lovable and winsome of the modern heroes of the Mission field. As a lad he was known as "mad Jim"; but in his "harum scarum" heart there grew up a great love for Christ, and a great compassion for those who were in ignorance of Him and His grace. He was only thirty-eight when he laid down his life for Africa and his Lord; but he was lion-hearted all through his sufferings and cruel death, and even in his dying he called others to follow on and take up the work. And others heard and obeyed. One of the marvels of modern Mission work has been the way in which consecrated men and women have been eager to enter in where the pioneers have fallen at their posts: and great as many of our Missionaries have been

in their living, many of them have been even greater in their dying, and more fruitful far. Those whom they have inspired have done much to redeem our materialistic, pleasure-loving, money-seeking age from the accusation that the ages of heroism and faith are gone; and many Christian hearts are filled with the conviction that the Church can never abandon the territories where her heroes and heroines have laid down their lives, and where her dead have been laid.

As a contrast to this infeftment by burial, and yet in strict harmony with it, is another of the outstanding and picturesque facts of the Mission history of the nineteenth century—the departure for China in 1884 and 1885 of the Cambridge seven, including Mr. Stanley Smith and Mr. C. T. Studd, in connection with the work of the China Inland Mission, through which so much enduring service has been done. Even as the cry of the dying veteran out in the wilds, "Build me a hut to die in," touched many hearts and lifted up many lives to a new level, so the consecration of these bright, cultured young lives in the midst of comfort and plenty went home to many a heart which might not otherwise have been touched, and led to many a dedication of everything to God for service wherever He chose to use the surrendered lives.

Until 1815, most of the Missionaries who had gone out to the front had had no definite training for the work, and in not a few instances they had not even received a special training of any sort. Many of them were artisans and peasants by birth; and while they were none the worse for that, but in the same company as Luther and the Apostles and our Lord Himself, it is full of significance that now all ranks and classes are joining in the service, and that so many are volunteering who are able to go at their own charges.

A signal instance of how the new conception of the work is spreading is to be found in the rise of the Student Volunteer Movement, through which so many of the brightest and best of the young men and women of our time have devoted themselves and their gifts and training to the service of Christ in foreign lands; many of them inspired by the conviction that even in this generation the whole world may hear the story of redeeming love. They do not seem to be all at one in their interpretation of their battle-cry, but they are in no doubt as to its inspiring power.

This fruitful movement was initiated in America in the very year, 1886,[1] which brought home the

[1] Four years before that, in 1882, twelve divinity students of the Free Church of Scotland's New College, Edinburgh, volunteered and were all sent to the Mission field, save one who was rejected by the doctor for tropical service.

sad tidings of the martyrdom of Hannington, and it was organised in Great Britain in 1892. Within the ten years which followed no fewer than 1880 students in colleges in the United Kingdom signed a declaration expressing their purpose, "if God permit," to be Foreign Missionaries; and, more noteworthy still, during that period as many as 733 actually went out and began work in the foreign field.

Probably, however, the most outstanding feature of the growth of the Mission work of the nineteenth century, as it has reached the enormous dimensions already indicated, has been the way in which it has been specialised and differentiated, so that the attack on heathenism might be made in every possible fashion, and that the gifts of the Mission agents might be best employed in the attack. Along with the "harmlessness of the dove," the simplicity of spirit which cannot but characterise those who have given themselves wholly to God, there has also been much of the "wisdom of the serpent"—strenuous endeavour to make the most of the ways and means and of every varying circumstance, and to be original and ingenious in the determination to give the best to God.

From the first it was seen that educational work is of surpassing importance, especially among such

ancient civilisations as those of India, China, and Japan. In India in particular, with its non-Christian and anti-Christian schools and colleges, it has been felt to be imperative that there should be a great system of educational Missions. And as the years go by there is a new unanimity in this respect. Of old there was a certain jealousy of such work, as a departure from the imperative duty and privilege of preaching the Gospel; but it is now recognised that there can be no more splendid opportunity to preach Christ than in Christian schools and colleges. Even the China Inland Mission, so honourably associated with the determination not to know anything among the heathen save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, have now the courage to raise the triple cry as descriptive of their work: "Itineration, Organisation, and Education." They truly say, however, that the basis of all their educational work must be essentially Christian, otherwise they would only produce polished pagans, which is "no part of the duty of the Missionary of the Cross."

Industrial Missions, again, have been found to be of the utmost value in Africa; in India among famine orphans; and among tribes formerly given up to pillage and warfare. Even as it was among the barbarians who once menaced the Empire in its decadent days, so it is with the African aborigines.

They can only be saved from idleness and savagery by giving them something to possess and protect, and by teaching them the arts and crafts of civilisation ; and what are called "Artisan Missionaries" have been among the most devoted servants our Lord has had in the dark places of the earth. This same tendency to specialisation has led along somewhat different lines to such special Missions as those to the lepers, and to special districts, as the China Inland Mission, with its beneficent services in the interior of the vast Empire of China.

Of all the developments, however, which the nineteenth century has witnessed, it is in no way invidious to say that the most epoch-making have been those connected with medical Mission work, and with the work of women Missionaries, both for other women and for Mission work generally. Medical Missions are now recognised everywhere to be an all-important branch of the work of world-evangelisation. When it is borne in mind how crude and cruel many of the native methods of dealing with disease and sickness are, it can be readily understood how miracles of healing have been wrought in many lands comparable only with those of Apostolic days, even if they be on a different plane. It is an almost incredible boon, amid the empiricism and brutality

of pagan ways, to get the benefits of modern medical and surgical skill, and the benefits also of modern nursing. Such Missions are of peculiar value in Mohammedan lands, where the open preaching of the Gospel is so difficult, and where it is sometimes altogether impossible.

The obstacles to a public avowal of faith in Christ in such a country as Morocco, for example, are almost incredibly great. In some parts, at least, of that land, even where the most self-sacrificing work has been done for many years, there has been no instance of baptism; and nothing but the immense superiority of the medical and surgical skill of the Missionaries would secure them an entrance at all. Such Mission work is just one of the lines along which we may fairly expect nations to be born in a day; and it is no wonder that every year sees rapid development of this branch of the work; or that already there are more than 500 fully qualified Missionary doctors at work, both men and women. Of these, 400 labour in connection with British Missions alone.

In the year 1898, it was calculated that in British Mission hospitals there were over 30,000 in-patients, and that in that same year nearly 1,500,000 visits were paid to out-patients. According to the figures compiled by Dr. Dennis at the end of the century, there were 480 medical

men and 220 medical women at work in the foreign field, and in connection with their beneficent work there were 379 Mission hospitals and 783 Mission dispensaries, in addition to 100 homes for lepers, and kindred institutions. The in-patients in these institutions in one year were given as 85,169; the individual patients as 2,347,780; and the total treatments as 6,442,427.

Who can tell how much this has added to the sum total of human comfort and happiness, or how many doors it has opened to the entrance of the Healer Christ? It is the great apologetic, the great exposition, and the great Evangelical appeal, given in a form which can hardly be misunderstood. This work reaches every rank and class, the highest as well as the lowest, as no other does; it enters the most closely-sealed doors of harem or zenana, and it speaks to every heart in accents which cannot but break down the loftiest barrier and destroy the most inveterate and hoary superstitions. Not only so; but in its association with the Lord Jesus Christ it stands out in blessed contrast to the native methods of dealing with sickness and disease, many of which are not only incredibly absurd, but are usually associated with their pagan priests and their pagan worship and beliefs.

As for the development of women's work, which has proceeded alongside of this and has been a part

of it, that also has been very important and very beneficent. According to Dr. Dennis's figures—and in these figures he has laid the Church under lasting obligations—if married women are included, as most of them most assuredly ought to be, there were more women than men at work in the foreign field at the close of the nineteenth century—an extraordinary contrast to the state of affairs when that century began. There were then no unmarried white women at work as foreign Missionaries at all; there were only a few Eurasians.[1]

From a very early date the wives of married Missionaries were, of course, doing noble service; but it was only as recently as the last quarter of the bygone century that either the Church Missions

[1] Dr. Dennis's actual figures are that in 1900 there were 8220 women and 7280 men at work as Missionaries in the regions beyond. Even since then great progress has been made all along the line, as the following figures compiled by Rev. Dr. D. L. Leonard, which may be introduced here, abundantly prove :—

	1908.	1909.	Advance.
Home income . . .	£4,569,293	£4,922,615	£353,322
Income on field . . .	968,763	971,921	3,158
Total Missionaries . .	19,875	21,834	1,959
Ordained native helpers .	4,999	5,929	930
Stations and out-stations .	41,563	43,934	2,371
Communicants . . .	2,056,173	2,097,963	41,790
Baptized during year .	164,674	135,141	—
Adherents	4,285,199	4,866,661	581,462
Schools	28,164	29,190	1,026
Scholars	1,290,582	1,413,995	123,413

Only in one respect has there been a decline. It, however, is in the most important matter of baptisms.

or the Missionary Societies encouraged the sending out of unmarried women to any appreciable extent. But, when once women's work was fairly begun, it commended itself so much that its extension has been phenomenally rapid. Not only do Christian women make splendid workers in the ordinary service and in specialised forms of service alike; in the spirit of those who were first at the tomb and last at the cross, they have been offering themselves for this work in very large numbers, and bringing an infinite variety of gifts and graces to the service of the King.

During the closing fifteen years of the last century the Church Missionary Society alone sent out no fewer than 500 women Missionaries; while in the year 1900 the China Inland Mission alone had 300 unmarried women on its roll. If the total number of British Missionaries be taken as approximately 7000, they are made up of 1900 married men and their wives, 1400 unmarried men, and 1800 unmarried women—figures which bring out in a very striking way how the women's side of the work has grown, and how boundless are its possibilities. These women Missionaries do medical work, educational work, and evangelistic work. They visit from house to house, often where men could not enter, and from village to village. They conduct classes for female inquirers, and classes

for training native agents, and much else of the utmost importance. Most manifestly women can do much for the home and for their sister women which men could never do, and which nevertheless lies at the very basis of all else. Not only so, but women's work for men is also proving itself to be of infinite worth.

It is in no way necessary to dilate here on the noble Mission work which the nineteenth century has seen done by Missionaries who came from other parts than the British Islands. The Colonial Churches, the Continental Churches, and the American Churches alike, have all been at work and doing noble service; and in addition, some of the foreign Mission Churches have themselves become Missionary, as they are all bound to do as soon as they can look over the nest and can hear the appeals of human ignorance, and misery, and need. Their liberality has often been beyond praise, both as regards men and means. And here once more we see that the most enduring *entente cordiale* is that which is found in the foreign field. French and Germans can work there in spite of Alsace and Lorraine; Dutch and Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, agree in claiming, and in joining to claim, the whole round earth for their one Lord and one faith.

As for the American Missions, they deserve a

volume to themselves. Their Missionaries are said to number over 14,800, and in many lands they are doing splendid and original work. As for the different Societies, there is a constant rivalry among them, at least in the homeland, which is often holy and always keen. The newer Societies are said by the older Societies to have more zeal than discretion; and the older Societies are said in turn by the newer Societies to have more discretion than zeal. But it cannot be claimed for any of them that their zeal has outrun their discretion. There is always abundance of discretion in all Christian communities, and it cannot be truthfully alleged even of the newest Societies that there has been too much zeal. Both there and here there has always been enough discretion to keep all the zeal there was in check; and no matter how much the zeal increases, it is probable that that will always be the case.

A deeply interesting and picturesque feature of the Mission work of the bygone century is the way in which great names have become associated with the various lands which have been already won in whole or in part. Many of these are destined to go down to posterity with a sort of territorial dignity which is as well deserved as it is unique. We are wont now to speak of Gilmour of Mongolia, of Chalmers of New Guinea, of Paton of the New

Hebrides, and of Mackay of Uganda, as if they were peers of the realm. And truly they are the aristocrats of the Kingdom of God by a Divine creation; members of the Legion of Honour of the Mission enterprise, arbitrarily chosen, like most legions of honour, yet erring not in those whom it includes, but in some which it has not enrolled as yet. This new roll-call of the heroes of the faith is already so long that time would fail us to tell of it in detail or even to name those members of it of whose worth and work we happily know.

Eternity alone will reveal all that humanity and the Church owe to men and women like Dr. Jacob Chamberlain among the Telugus, or Miss Annie Taylor in Tibet; like Dr. James Stewart in Lovedale, or Dr. Laws in Livingstonia; like Bishop Selwyn and his friend Coleridge Patteson in Melanesia, or Fred Arnot in Garenganze, or Bishop Horder among the Eskimo and the Indians; like John Williams, the apostle of the South Seas, or William Burns, the pioneer of North China, and Hudson Taylor, the pioneer of Inland China; like Damien among the lepers, or James Calvert among the cannibals. They had "trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; of whom the world was not worthy." But they, and others like them, have brought joy to the sad, rest to the weary, and

liberty to the captive. They have gone where soldiers could not force an entrance. They have proved that the consecrated pen is mightier than the sword, and the Gospel mightier than either or both. They have opened up the way to all sorts of social reform. And many of the greatest and best and most heroic of them are on no other roll-call than the Lamb's Book of Life; and well content were they, and are they, that it should be so.

And the very thought of this great array of names and achievements shows how true it is that the nineteenth century stands out as the great Mission century, ranking even with the first. When the new era, which is now calling believers to the fray, leaves it far behind, as it can and must, it will still be the peculiar glory of the nineteenth century that it made the twentieth possible, and that it furnished the twentieth with its most inspiring examples, as well as with many of its keenest and most useful tools.

CHAPTER IX

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand."—Rom. 13. 12.

"Christ alone can save the world, but Christ cannot save the world alone."

"Each new time its new thought
Must in new words tell,
And the old primary heart tones
The new music swell;
And ever in grander theologies
Higher truths be sown;
But unchanged amid all changes
God's heart and our own."

CHAPTER IX

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE history of the twentieth century has still for the most part to be made; and forecasts, even the cleverest and most scientific, are poor substitutes for the actual record of what God has wrought. Yet it is much to be able to realise that the clay is still plastic, that the die has yet to be cast; and the sense that we are on the verge of a new era—it may perhaps be the last era—is everywhere present with those who seek to discern the signs of the times, and to be loyal to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The conviction, too, is both widespread and strong that the situation, as the Church must now face it, is both critical and acute.

If the nineteenth century began with a new enthusiasm for the rights of man, which showed itself in reform both at home and abroad, and in unwonted Mission enterprise everywhere, the twentieth century has been ushered in amid the

unquestioned predominance of social problems. There are not a few of these problems which must be solved somehow, and that ere long—solved peacefully, if that be possible, but possibly also in violence and strife. The yearning prayer of every believer must be that the solution may come under the leadership of Christ and in harmony with His revealed will. It would be supremely shameful if, in this Christian land, the nation were to go forward under an alien flag to succour and deliver the poor, over whom He yearns and who used to hear Him gladly.

There is, indeed, a certain danger that this predominance of the social yearnings and needs of our time may divert attention from Foreign Missions, and give point to the cry that until things have been put right at home there can be no call to go abroad. But when that cry was raised in the stirring times with which the last century began—and it could be raised then as appropriately as now—it was not admitted as valid, and probably that will prove to be the case again. Spiritual beings are not built, like ships, in watertight compartments; and it has been proved that, when consciences are stirred and hearts are tender about the poor and needy in the homelands, they are also most keenly sensitive about the claims of the downtrodden and overshadowed beyond the

seas. And the converse is equally true, as all history avers. Those who set up the needs of the home field in opposition to the needs of the regions beyond are seldom seen to be crushed by the needs of the homelands; and similarly, those who are truly loyal to the call of the new era at home will not be found wanting in connection with the cry from abroad: "Come over and help us." Nor will those ever be found wanting at home who are loyal to the Great Commission, which is the charter, to the end of the ages, of the regions beyond and of those in the great lone lands of the shadow of death.

As a matter of fact, the situation among the great heathen communities, especially in the Far East, is such as to arrest the attention of all who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, with an imperative appeal which makes itself heard even amid the din of the social strife and turmoil at home. None can question that the situation at home is critical both in Church and State; but it is equally unquestionable in connection with the work abroad, alike from the blessing which God has been giving to the workers and from the open doors which are crying out for those who will bring the message of the King, that a new and intensely critical era has come. Both at home and abroad—and the two are so inextricably combined

that it is hardly possible to put asunder what God has joined—the appeal to the Churches is such that the summons to all of them ought to be irresistible, to vote the matter urgent, as is sometimes done in foreign parliaments, and make a great combined advance all along the line. In our day, we seem to have reached one of the making or marring times on which all else depends; those who are deaf to the new appeal not only condemn themselves to disaster and death, they pass judgment on themselves, and show that they are not right with God.

On the threshold of this new era, and on the verge of the unknown, the prayerful inquirer is conscious that there are many diverse and antagonistic forces at work all over the battlefield; and that while some of them make for the prosecution of Foreign Mission work more vigorously than ever, not a few of them are bitterly hostile. Foremost among the favourable forces must surely be put the new way of looking at Missions and the Mission problem which is now dominant in the State as well as in the Church. In the State it may be seen in the manner in which the various European nations are now inclined to regard their Missionaries as pioneers of Empire.

The changed outlook has its obvious drawbacks. It may lead to the Gospel becoming identified in

the minds of native Governments and peoples with schemes of aggrandisement with which they can have no sympathy; while it may also react on the Missionaries themselves in such a way that their work may suffer, as it has suffered both in China and on the Congo, through the attitude of the representatives of Rome. And yet, with all its dangers, it cannot but be acknowledged to be a grateful change from the time, not so far distant, when the various Governments did all they could to repress Missionaries as disturbers of the peace and troublers of their Israel, and boycotted them through their representatives abroad, as those who spoiled the natives. It is a poor affair for the ambassadors of the Prince of Peace to enter a land behind Maxim guns; but it is only right and proper that they should get the protection of their flag when it is being used to promote peaceful expansion. The modern Missionary as well as the ancient Missionary may say, "*Civis Romanus sum*," when that will aid him in his work for Christ.

There was a time not so remote when our statesmen thought that the British Empire was big enough, and their responsibilities already too great. But that time has gone in the demand for new markets, and the process of partition has only ceased because meanwhile there are no more territories to divide or annex. Along with that

attitude has also disappeared, at least among the far-seeing, the way of looking at Foreign Missions which used to commend itself to critics like Sydney Smith, as well as the view which commended itself to critics like Charles Dickens; to say nothing of the view which commended itself to foreign traders and globe-trotters, whose dogmatism was in an inverse ratio to their knowledge. The new Imperialism may have its drawbacks in the sphere of Missions as in the sphere of politics, and may sometimes be flamboyant and vainglorious; but even so, its advent is full of significance and full of possibilities of conquest of the waste lands in the near future. It is foremost among the more modern forces which should be consecrated to the service of Christ all over the earth.

In the Church this new attitude to Missions may be taken as manifesting itself in such a movement as that of the Student Volunteer, backed up, as it has been of late, by the Young People's Missionary Movement; the Laymen's Missionary Movement; and the movement for Mission Study. There may, indeed, be some element of loss in the growth of the conviction that Foreign Missions are not to be looked on as exceptional, but as something which ought to have a place in every Christian congregation and in

every Christian life. But there is also the unspeakable gain which comes through seeing things from the standpoint of the Divine, and therefore getting away from the merely accidental to that which is essential and eternal.

Beyond any question, the normal state of affairs should be that Foreign Missions are not to be engaged in merely when everything has been attended to at home—as if everything could ever be right there along such lines; but that such work should form an integral part of the regular operations of every Christian church and congregation, an integral part of the living interests of every Christian life. Opposition to Foreign Missions from within the Church ought to be treated just as opposition to the work of ingathering at home would be—as an aberration, that is, which hardly requires to be met by serious argument. To say that it is better to leave the heathen nations as they are, should be held as akin to saying that evil social conditions should be left as they are, and that it is unwise to stir up strife with the selfish and callous by letting the light of the Gospel shine in on their unworthy practices.

Nothing but good can come from the serious and systematic education of the young people in the implications of the Gospel and the needs of the heathen; and the more picturesque the educa-

tion is the better, since Christ's service demands our best. Similarly, nothing but good can come from the effective organisation of the "laymen" for the study and support of this work; and if many of them pray themselves into the work abroad, who never meant to go there, that also is an incidental by-product which likewise can do nothing but good.

Mr. Spurgeon has it somewhere: "You ask me if the heathen will be saved if you do not send them the Gospel; I ask if you will be saved unless you do?" Nothing can be as it should be at home until there is frank obedience to the plain command of Christ; and it may be that the social problems are overwhelming as they are just now, because there has not been such frank obedience all along the line. Guidance comes along the line of loyalty to clear orders; and even if for most the duty at home may seem the duty "nearest us," the command to make disciples of all nations is so explicit that it too is among the duties nearest all who wish to obey their Lord. Nor will it be other than good if this unification of the two sides of the one whole should put an end to the disastrous conviction that the call to work in the foreign field is something quite different from the call to labour at home; and that anyone who goes abroad and comes home

again, for any other reason than ill-health or old age, is a near relative of Lot's wife.

God calls men and women to serve in all sorts of ways, and there is no warrant for the idea that He may not send a man abroad to work for Him there, and later on send him home again to do work there. Yet the fear lest they should incur the reproach of being deserters has prevented many from going abroad who felt that they had no warrant for binding themselves for life, although they were willing to go abroad at the time. It is one of the wise features in connection with the Methodist ministry, that men may pass to and from the two branches of the one work without any fear of being misunderstood, and such honourable coming and going is all for the good of the whole Church.

The twentieth century has inherited much from the nineteenth century which ought to aid it mightily in its Mission operations. There are, for example, the many native Churches which now exist and flourish to show what can be done, as well as the gracious lives and deeds of the many noble men and women, no longer with us, through whose devotion and perseverance they came into being. A century ago the most grotesque misconceptions prevailed, and the friends of Missions had to argue against the most

extraordinary theories. Now we have a great body of gracious facts, which speak eloquently for themselves; and if it be true that the native Churches are not all perfect, and the native Christians not always as like their Master as they ought to be, that is still unfortunately true of Churches and Christians at home.

In this connection, nothing is more striking than the lofty standard which some critics of Missions—traders, travellers, and others in foreign lands—set up for all who profess to have come under the influence of the Missionaries. Men who are church members, but are nevertheless living careless lives, are greatly shocked if those who have just been digged out of the miry clay of paganism are not flawless and without reproach; and if they are disappointed in a servant who was ever in a Mission school, they write home that the Missionaries are spoiling the natives. It is not merely that they criticise without adequate knowledge, and without seeking for adequate knowledge; they denounce Missions as failures, and their converts as frauds, on grounds which would condemn the best of the home Churches without hope of recall.

Even the friends of Missions in the homelands are often most unreasonable in their expectations regarding the first generations of those who have

been rescued from heathenism, and have still to live in a heathen atmosphere. They are cheered and uplifted when they hear of men and women and children who have been redeemed from superstition and degradation by the power of the grace of Christ; but they sometimes forget how much has still to be done, and how formidable the obstacles are. They do not realise as they should the evil forces of heredity and environment with which these converts are beset; forces so formidable that even the Missionaries themselves groan under their malign power, and feel them to be like great cloud-banks of black fog for ever tending to bewilder and lead astray. They forget, too, what the Epistles of the New Testament reveal regarding the faults and errors of the first generation of converts to Christ, even when men like Peter and Paul and John were the Missionaries.

It is hardly possible for those at home to imagine what the constant impact of heathenism means for those who are continually faced by it; and especially what it must mean for those who have its allies not merely in their homes but in their blood and bones. Some of our best Missionaries have spoken of it as laying hold of them even while they were still out at sea, as they were returning to their posts, like some pestifer-

ous mist sending a chill to their hearts; and it is probable that it would be better if more of the Missionaries were to be explicit as to how things actually are, and were to let the moral difficulties of their converts, not to speak of their own, be better known at home. It is not their business to offer apologies either for little growth in numbers, where that is the case, or for slow growth among their converts in likeness to the Lord. It is their business to be perfectly frank, and to share their responsibilities, perplexities, and disappointments, as well as their victories and joys, with the Church and those who are behind them at home.

In return, it should be the business of the helpers at home to envelop those abroad in such an atmosphere of prayer and faith as shall counteract and conquer the evil atmosphere in which they and theirs have to work. It is part of the reflex influence of Foreign Missions on the Church at home that it tends to keep those at home nearer the rudimentary and essential needs of unregenerate men, and nearer the Divine provision which alone prevails; and it is all for good that the eternal antagonism should be more and more clearly realised both there and here.

In addition to the rich inheritance which the twentieth century has in the Churches which have

been built up among the heathen during the nineteenth century, there is also the abundant Missionary literature to which the new era has fallen heir, and to which it is constantly making such worthy additions. There is what may be called the working plant of the Church as Missionary—the translations, dictionaries, and grammars, and much else of the same sort—which has come down to us through the toil of the most self-effacing labourers the Church has ever known.

But these labours have been as fruitful as they have been self-forgetting; and when we add to them the momentum which is now derived from the vast organisation which is everywhere at work in the sacred cause, both at home and abroad, it is manifest indeed that our century has entered on its work with enormous advantages compared with the century which has gone. And there are also the literary records of much that has been achieved, the best proofs that truth is stranger than fiction, the noblest *apologia* of the faith as it is in Christ; these might well inspire our generation to hasten to complete the work, and to share in it ere there is no more such work to be done.

There are not only the classic biographies, such as those which tell of Carey and Judson, of Martyn and Heber, of John Wilson and Duff, of Williams and Livingstone; there are volumes like

Dr. Lambert's *Romance of Missionary Heroism*, which show how far it is from the truth to suggest that the age of faith or heroism is over. There is no need to patronise sensational and unhealthy fiction in order to find stirring adventures and thrilling narratives, when such books have been placed at the disposal of young and old alike as Calvert's *Cannibals and Saints*, Mackay's *From Far Formosa*, Miss Taylor's *Pioneering in Tibet*, Ashe's *Two Kings of Uganda*, Thomson's *Through Masailand*, Gilmour's *Among the Mongols*, Chamberlain's *The Cobra's Den*, Miss Wilson Carmichael's *Overweights of Joy* and *Lotus Buds*, and many another record of the wonders wrought by the knights who have gone out to do battle with all evil and wrong under the banner of Christ and His Cross.

There is, however, another side to all this. There are also many forces which are bitterly hostile, as well as many which, without being actually hostile, are sapping the strength of the Church and weakening its enthusiasm for Missions; and of these some are quite modern and new. A century ago, for example, when influences of a negative or destructive kind assailed the faith, they always operated from without; whereas now almost all the power of such forces arises from the fact that they often operate from within.

There is, for instance, the effect on not a few of what is called the Higher Criticism, which was not born a century ago, although there were anticipations of it. No one can assert that all the criticism which has been indulged in within recent years from within the citadel has been either helpful or believing, or that it should have been offered by professed friends. We must, of course, be loyal to the light wherever it leads, and welcome truth even when it comes in unwonted ways; for God fulfils Himself in many ways. Nor has any enterprise less cause to fear the light than the Mission enterprise. But, owing to their instability and ignorance, there are many for whom a passage in the Old Testament or an incident in the New is never quite the same after it has been assailed, no matter how unwarrantably, by a Wellhausen or a Schmiedel.

There is only too much cause for fearing that in many subtle ways, especially as it has affected the ill-informed, for whom a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, the Higher Criticism has tended to weaken the impulses which have hitherto inspired some of the best Missionaries the Church has had. That may be only a part of the truth and a passing phase; but it can hardly be ignored in an attempt to estimate the forces which are meanwhile at work in connection with Foreign

Missions. When once men and women find themselves in the stream of tendency which flows from an incipient dislike of the supernatural—that is, which is in reality rationalism in the making if it does its perfect work—they must either sink or swim across. It is not possible to go back to mere traditionalism when once the soul has been in the flood; and only too many who find themselves in these depths lose their hold of the old without getting any effective grip of the new, and thereby cease for the time being to be of any account in the battle of life. This is not the place for attempting an estimate of the merits and demerits of the modern critical movement; but that it has an unsettling and disconcerting tendency for some, and cannot but continue to have such a tendency while the transition stage lasts, can hardly be denied. It is probable, indeed, that no one would question this; and for the crowds who never go farther than this unsettling stage there are phases of criticism which seem to rob the Word of God of its supreme authority and of its Divine fascination and power, a loss which is immeasurably great. That they may know criticism only at second hand, and on its negative side alone, makes the loss none the less real.

Then there are others for whom the rise of what

is called Comparative Religion has acted directly or indirectly in very much the same way. It does not matter that it ought not so to act, or that the Missionary enterprise itself has more than anything else rendered this study inevitable, and has provided the material for it. The fact remains that the uniqueness of Scripture, and even of the Christian religion, has vanished for not a few; and that even the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ has come to be thought of by them as one way out of many, and not as the only revelation of the one living Way and of the Name which is above every name. They lose themselves among the Sacred Books of the East, and in their contemplation of the glories of Gautama and Confucius. It makes no difference, apparently, that the more we know of its rivals the more does the unique glory of the Gospel appear. There are so many who have only a smattering, or even a reflection of a smattering; and for such the fascination has gone, the spell has been broken, the truth has lost its power, when once they have embarked on these speculations and comparisons. Even those who lecture on Comparative Religion from the Christian standpoint have sometimes so much that is good to say about the great pagan systems as to leave the impression that the supremacy of the Gospel is a matter of degree rather than of kind.

Missionaries face to face with the facts have another tale to tell.

Nor can we afford to ignore the fact that the Higher Criticism and Comparative Religion affect many who know nothing whatever about them through any personal study or knowledge. They hear the shout of the enemy that the fortress has fallen; and even when they do not join in the cry, they conclude that the great verities and realities of the faith are at least open questions, on which discussion may be looked for and widely differing opinions held. They hear about myths, interpolations, anticipations, tendencies, and much else, until they cannot but drift unless their feet are actually on the Rock of Ages, and they have had personal transactions with Christ Himself. Not only so, but these and kindred studies have begotten an attitude to revealed truth which has found its way into the magazines and newspapers; and although the stream of tendency which trickles down to the general public may become very much attenuated, it works all the more mischief that it comes without anything of the nature of the corrective which fuller knowledge would bring.

Even for those who resent the tone of much modern writing as irreverent and unworthy, it lowers the temperature and sends a paralysing chill to their hearts which is the sworn foe of Mission

enthusiasm. "Cold is the malady of the soul," says Comte; and many who have no notion how the cold blasts have come, and no sympathy with them, are suffering from chill in their souls because of the icebergs of criticism and doubt which have floated into their zone. In the spirit as in the body, many of the deadliest maladies begin with a cold.

It is also probable that among the weakening influences which are at work sapping the enthusiasm for Missions of many in this twentieth century not the least mischievous is the change, intangible but intensely persistent and real, which has passed over the minds of so many in connection with the belief in eternal punishment. The spirit of Tennyson's dream—

> "But yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill;
> . . . . . .
> That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God has made the pile complete,"

has affected very many who would probably repudiate the suggestion. This at any rate is indisputable, that whether men now believe in eternal punishment or not, the preachers of our time, and even our evangelists, have ceased to proclaim it as it was once proclaimed; that the fear

of it has faded out of the popular belief and imagination with startling rapidity during the last quarter of a century; and that this change has brought other changes with it.

It is, of course, quite impossible to tell how far those who have gone forth into the heathen darkness, with the torch of Christian truth in their hands, were driven forth by their belief in the eternal doom of those who die in their sins, and by their yearning to tell them of a Deliverer. Yet it is obvious that it must have had a place along with other motives; and with some it does seem to have been the determining motive. It is equally impossible to tell how far men and women will continue to go forth in large numbers if they are convinced that, in taking the Gospel to the heathen, with the likelihood of blessing some, there is the fearful risk of worsening the state of others who may reject the message they deliver. But it is more than likely that the crude, indefinite, hazy, and even cowardly conceptions about doom which are shutting the mouths of so many at home are weakening the hands and slackening the zeal of some who would otherwise have been Foreign Missionaries, and it may even be of some who are out at the front and in the very firing line.

The nobler the work, and the more spiritual the ties, the more sensitive are they to any such subtle

change as this. And there is nothing in regard to which guidance from Word and Spirit should be sought for more earnestly and persistently in this connection than that Christian men and women may everywhere know the truth regarding this terribly solemn and difficult theme, in such a fashion that they will be able to feel strongly and speak convincingly about the fearful doom of moral evil; of the fearful cursing, corroding, destroying power of sin wherever it manifests itself, whether in Christian lands or far away in heathen darkness and unbelief.

The end of these things is death, and cannot but be death. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death; yet meanwhile only too many are silent about these dread facts, after a fashion which can only work woe. The fear of hell may be nothing higher than a "hangman's whip to haud the wretch in order"; but there are so many wretches who must be kept in order, that the whip cannot be dispensed with. It must either be brought into use again, or some adequate substitute found for it. The whole truth of God's Word must be ascertained and faithfully proclaimed, no matter what the consequences are, or all Mission work will suffer alike at home and abroad.

In addition to these more or less doctrinal hostile influences, which are meanwhile at work in opposi-

tion to the spirit which sends labourers into the vineyard, a place must also be found for the predominance of the material—the love of comfort, pleasure, and ease, and the keen appreciation of what money brings, which mean so much in modern life, and nowhere more than in the Church, official and unofficial. It is, indeed, in connection with Mission work alone that the heroic any longer survives to any appreciable extent even in this new era, with all its unique calls to action. Even in trade and commerce it is becoming increasingly difficult to find those who are willing to endure hardness, or to burn the midnight oil; while in learning and research fewer than ever are to be found who are ready to face privation and danger in search of knowledge.

Beyond any cavil, one of the menaces of the twentieth century is the spirit of materialism, which has crept so subtly into much of our modern life and thought, and which is affecting our generation so adversely and in so many ways through the weakening or the destruction of the ideals set before young and old alike. Multitudes no longer believe in anything which they cannot cut with a dissecting knife or see through a glass. Many even of those who are seeking for the good refuse to seek for the best; and thus the very good which is the glory of our era, its richest inheritance

from the days which are gone—its inventions, and its sensitiveness to injustice or need or wrongs, and its yearning to secure comfort for all—is made the enemy of that best which still lies in front, that golden age which is still calling the faithful and courageous to further quest.

At the present time the primary need of the Foreign Mission field is not money alone, as so many suppose, but men and women. Not long since, even for Manchuria, where the tide of blessing has been flowing deep and broad, and in spite of the Student Volunteer Movement and much else of the same sort, both doctors and teachers were being appealed for in vain. An eminent Missionary from China recently visited several colleges in Scotland, seeking men to go out as ordained ministers, and did so in vain, although adequate salaries were already in hand. This phase will doubtless soon pass away; and even now it is probable that a "labour exchange" or a "Mission clearing house" would put matters right. The likelihood is that there were never more workers willing to go abroad than there are now, taking the field as a whole; but even as a temporary or local phase of the situation, it is disconcerting to find such a state of affairs, and it seems to be only too manifest that the materialistic spirit is very far-reaching in its operations, and that it can assail the best. It

is, indeed, to perfected organisation, rather than to any conspicuous self-surrender or heroism, that the Church must meanwhile look for her workers in any sphere; but as she does this duty which is nearest to her, the way to the heights will assuredly open up once again with all its holy fascination and its irresistible appeal.

And all this only makes the fundamental thesis clearer and clearer that the work at home and the work abroad are not two, but one; and that the two sides of the one whole must stand or fall together. Everything is hardest for the man who is down, and every difficulty is accentuated for the Church when the temperature falls as it has fallen now. Every evil microbe gets its opportunity when vitality is low; but loyal obedience all round the circle of the world's need would soon put doubts and fears to flight. Obedience to the call of the new era, with all its possibilities of weal or woe, would speedily bring that fuller light in which the Church would see clearly and find perfect peace in the service of her Lord. Nothing less than such obedience, however, can scatter the clouds of materialism, put the mists of worldliness and unbelief to flight, and bring the fuller revelation of the grace and power of God. God must have a willing people in the day of His power.

In thus trying to detail and describe the forces which are against world-evangelisation as well as those which are in favour of it, there is, of course, no suggestion that the forces which are hostile are worthy to be compared with those which are friendly to the work of spreading the Light. It is not possible to measure forces of that sort in such a fashion as to be able to estimate their relative influence. There is no common denominator. Majorities do not count in the realm of the spirit; nor can averages be struck in dealing with spiritual forces either for or against. Yet it is necessary that Christians be on their guard lest they despise the foe; and it must be clearly understood that while this generation engages in the work of winning the world for Christ, on terms vastly more favourable than those on which our grandfathers entered on it, there has been loss as well as gain in the enormous changes which have taken place in so many spheres.

As an instance, however, of the difficulty of opening any exact profit and loss account in this realm, it must not be overlooked that the modern critical spirit, which can take nothing for granted, and has thrown into the melting pot so many things which used to be taken for granted, has on its destructive side been even busier in the foreign field than at home and that it has been dis-

integrating many of the forces which once were mightiest on behalf of paganism.

In India, for example, the outcome of the advance of Western science and the spread of the Western spirit has been that, consciously or unconsciously, the educated classes no longer believe in the old cosmogonies, and that much else has gone out of the faith of the multitudes which was altogether vital. Many may still be as Samson was when he wist not that the Lord was departed from him; but the realities have disappeared, only the forms remain, and nothing can be again as it was in the past. Rays of emancipating light are even stealing into the darkened zenanas, the last strongholds of the old faiths. The attempts which are being made to reform and reconstruct Hinduism and Mohammedanism in India show how conscious some are of the change which has taken place, and of the impossibility of maintaining the *status quo.*

And it has to be borne in mind that much if not most of this disillusionment—for it is nothing more as yet—has come under the auspices of a science which is taught by those who are frankly non-religious. The Christian Missionary has often to pull down the ancient edifices of faith, but he does so that he may build up again. He has no pleasure in destruction for its own sake; and very often he destroys by first of all building up, so that

the new is there before the old departs—like the new leaves on the beech hedge in spring which push their predecessors off. But it has been far otherwise with many of the teachers of modern India. Their learning is godless. Their work is wholly negative, so far as religion is concerned, and sometimes it has been even malignantly so. There have been Europeans who have done their best to indoctrinate the educated Indians with the vileness of the basest in the home countries ; but even where that was not the case, many of India's teachers have ignored the fact that man was made for God, and have nothing for the empty yearning hearts which they profess to guide. Hence the present restlessness, which is full of danger if it is also full of the possibilities of endless advance, and the dangers can only be averted by the immediate response of the Churches to the blessed possibilities.

In China, too, the modern spirit is working extraordinary changes ; and, especially in connection with education, a situation has been created which would have been incredible only a year or two ago. It is indeed difficult for any but those who are experts, or are on the spot, to realise how swiftly changes of infinite moment are taking place in that great Empire and among that deeply interesting people, for whom all who labour among them seem to have such an affection. If education

is not already universal and compulsory, it would appear to be from the lack of teachers rather than from any lack of desire on the part of the rulers. It is true that meanwhile they wish education for purely utilitarian ends, and in order that China may acquire the military, naval, and financial learning of the West, and may no longer be the prey of the Western nations. But even so it is more than probable that the present generation will see repeated in China the phenomenal transformation which the last generation saw coming over Japan; and if only the image and superscription of Christ can be put on her education while China is still plastic and in the making, the gain to humanity will be incredibly great.

In spite of all that has been said at Conventions and elsewhere about this, it does not seem to be sufficiently understood yet. If it were, there would be awe in every faithful heart. Never in the history of mankind were such vast numbers of people undergoing such radical changes as now in the Far East; and the call of the new era is there, sounding very loud and clear for all who have ears to hear and hearts to understand. The old phrases about the unchanging East, the immemorial East, the inherent conservatism of the East, will soon have no meaning; and those who truly know the Lord can never hesitate as to what China needs

most of all and first of all. Those, too, who know the two peoples at first hand all seem to put the Chinese before the Japanese as a people of infinite possibilities and notable qualities, and to cherish the most wonderful expectations as to how far they may go if only they find the true Lord.

As to what may happen if China's regeneration as an Empire comes under other auspices than the Christian, that is a matter for the Governments as well as the Churches. The Yellow Peril might then become a peril indeed, and China has many accounts to square with the Western peoples which might all be squared then with compound interest. The possibilities are weirdly striking, and the yearning of every believing soul must be that this nation which is being born in a day may soon come under the spell of Christ; and it can only do so if the Christian Church everywhere responds to the Divine summons which is coming in a fashion so impressive and so momentous.

In the nearer East, too, as has been already seen, there is a stirring among the Mohammedans which cannot but spread. The imperturbable Turks, the apparently impenetrable Moors, and the hopeless Persians are all alike undergoing epoch-making changes, so that they can never again be as they were; and with political changes so far-reaching, there cannot but come a renaissance which will

affect their theological and religious outlook. Already in India the movement has taken shape in an attempt to remove the most obvious excrescences of Islam; and the strivings for political liberty in Morocco, Persia, Turkey, and Egypt, cannot end there. A man is not many but one, and real freedom will soon tell all round.

One of the most noteworthy proofs of the new spirit which has entered Islam is the great Missionary efforts which are being made to win converts for Mohammed from other religions. It is said, and it may be correct, that just now the religion of the False Prophet is gaining more converts from the most degraded tribes in Central Africa, than the religion of the True Prophet is winning from all sources whatsoever. Not only Christian Missionaries in the Soudan and elsewhere, but statesmen, like Sir Reginald Wingate, the Sirdar of the Eastern Soudan, are warning the Churches that Mohammedanism will win in the race for the African tribes which have not yet made their choice, unless many more labourers are sent forth at once into that corner of the vineyard. And where men do not know about Christ, it cannot but appear to be an actual uplift to become followers of Islam, and to know about Allah, the one God, even through that corrupted channel.

The Professor of Arabic at Cambridge has asserted

that one reason why Mohammedanism is meanwhile gaining more converts in Africa than Christ is that converts to Islam, no matter to what race they belong, are on the whole admitted freely and ungrudgingly to the social privileges, as well as to the obligations of the community with which they have cast in their lot; and that the same affirmation cannot be made regarding subject races which have become Christian. If that be so, we must not be above learning from the enemies of the truth. They have clearly been learning from us, for it is of the very essence of the Gospel to bring its converts in by the front door. They themselves may be willing to take the servant's place, but they are received as sons and daughters. The Father's response to the cry of their penitence and humiliation ever is: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet"; and that must also be the spirit of the Church's welcome too. But the point for us meanwhile is, that the twentieth-century spirit of yearning for reform, which is so active at home and among the great Eastern peoples, is also at work along several lines among the Mohammedan peoples all over the world.

In these circumstances, it is manifest that the outstanding feature of the Foreign Mission situation in this first decade of the twentieth century is its

extreme urgency. A tide has come in the affairs of the world and the Church which must be taken at the flood, unless there is to be declension and decay. Now is the judgment of this world; and at such a crisis the doom of disloyalty to the Divine call can only be estimated by the blessedness which obedience would assuredly bring. The twentieth century may prove to be the crowning epoch in the history of the Kingdom of God, and cannot but be so if the followers of Christ are equal to the call which the new era has brought. But, on the other hand, it may prove to be one of the darkest in history if there be failure and betrayal of sacred trusts and holy interests.

Two authorities, one representing the older generation and one representing the new, have spoken lately on this aspect of the situation, and their testimony is final as to the supreme urgency of the appeal which is coming from every part of the earth. Warneck, of Halle, is now a veteran in this department of knowledge, and his testimony is very vivid and conclusive: "Never since Christian Missions began have such world-wide opportunities been given for the extension of Christianity as recent years have brought. From South and East and West the ways have been opened up deep into the interior of Africa for the messengers of the Gospel; Japan seeks a new religion; the Chinese giant

has awaked out of his sleep of centuries, and is thirsting for Western culture; through Korea a mighty Christian movement is passing like a spring storm; and in India there is beginning a striving for national independence such as did not exist before—Divine signals in the history of the world that the time is fulfilled for great Missionary action.

"The older Missions, too, in which the formation of native Churches is already in process, and through which there is passing a more or less earnest seeking of ecclesiastical independence, are presenting new tasks in respect of organisation and education of the most far-reaching significance: tasks which include all manner of reforms with regard to the training of Missionaries and the administration of Missionary directorates.

"Finally, where there are open doors there is no lack of adversaries. With Missionary opportunities are associated Missionary dangers, and victory can only be won through conflict. In Eastern Asia, where now the hottest battle will be joined, on the one hand the influence of an irreligious Western science threatens with moral chaos the nations rooted in their traditional heathen view of the world; and on the other hand, the older cultured religions, idealised and almost transfigured with flattery by European scholars, threaten Missions with new

temptations to syncretist formations. The striving for ecclesiastical independence in the native Christian world, while gladdening in itself, exposes—and that not only in Africa—the Church to disorder, and Christianity to the danger of a religious and moral relapse, should an unwise doctrinarianism grant complete independence from the Missionary administration, when maturity of religious and moral experience and character has not yet been reached. At home, too, Missions are being more and more drawn into the great theological strife of the present time, and a Missionary method is being recommended of a different order in its motives and tasks and aims, which places in doubt the absolutism as well as the universality of Christianity.

"All this taken together shows us that the present great Missionary time is also a very critical Missionary time: that it demands men who redeem the present great Missionary opportunities with courageous faith and a resolution ready for sacrifice; who will, no less with believing loyalty and the wisdom taught by the Word of God, overcome the manifold temptations which threaten the very life of Christianity and of Missions. It is apparently just Missions which are to furnish the touchstone by which will be proved the different religious value of the old Apostolic Gospel and the new humanistic Christianity."

Such is the weighty deliverance and manifesto of one who in his old age is still young, and looks out on the new era with eyes filled with the wisdom of God and the fullest experience of the past. Nor is the testimony of Mr. Mott, the General Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation, who faces the problems of the new age with all the ardour of consecrated youth, and with eyes filled with the yearning to see the Gospel preached to all mankind before they close in death, any less impressive and far-reaching. "The present urgency and crisis in the extreme Orient is unmatched by any other crisis and opportunity which has confronted the Christian Church. It involves the destiny of nearly 500,000,000 of people of Japan, Korea, China, Manchuria, and Mongolia. Among these millions massed around the Pacific Basin, the forces of youth and age, of radicalism and conservatism, of growth and decay, are seething and struggling for the mastery. What religion shall dominate these changing peoples? Or shall it be no religion?

"It is a time of supreme crisis in the Far East, not only because of the triumphs of Christianity and the desirability of pressing the advantages which these triumphs afford, but also because of the stupendous changes now in progress in that Far Eastern world, especially on the mainland of

Asia; and the great desirability of Christianity bringing its full influence to bear while the conditions are still plastic. . . . It is also a time of supreme crisis in the Far East because of the rising spirit of nationalism and of race patriotism.

"If I were to mention another reason why this is a time of supreme crisis, it would be because of the grave and even disastrous reflex influence upon the Church in the West of failure to improve the unparalleled opportunity in the East. I confess that my anxiety is not lest there be [not] a great awakening in the East, but lest there may not be a corresponding awakening of the Church in the West. One result may be that we will become callous and hardened, and unresponsive to the moving of the living Spirit." Truly the call of the new era is very solemn as well as very urgent, and is coming to all who love the Christ.

There are many Mission problems which arise out of the history which has thus been hurriedly traversed in order that we might get the race which precedes the leap, and be open to the full impact of the call with which the new era has come, and one of the most important is just that to which Mr. Mott here alludes—the strange processes of interaction and reaction between the home and foreign fields of service which may be seen all through. How manifest the Holy Spirit

has made it, as He has clothed His gracious purposes in historical events, that these are not two fields, but one; and that there cannot be prosperity in either, full and abiding, unless there is loyalty in both. To go no farther back over the ground already traversed, who can doubt that the revivals with which the nineteenth century was blessed, like the revival with which it began, were largely due to the growth of obedience to the orders of the King?

On the other hand, it may very fairly be argued that the loss of the first glow of Missionary enthusiasm consequent on the emergence, necessary as that may have been, of organisation and machinery, led in no small degree to the arrested development of the work at home which so many are meanwhile deploring. The reflex influence of Missions on the Church's life must obviously be great; but it is probable that the reflex influence of Missions on the Church's doctrine is in no way less. Again and again new light has been thrown on Scripture, on Old Testament predictions and New Testament organisation, by events in the foreign field. And when the Church deals, as she ought to do, with the doctrine of the Holy Ghost on some such scale as that with which she has dealt with the doctrines of the Father and the Son, nothing will be of greater value to her in her

quest than her Mission records. We know the Spirit in His works of grace and might.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God can never get away from the conviction that obedience to the great Missionary Commission—which knows nothing of any division of the fields into home and foreign, as if Christ were divided, or as if the Eternal Spirit were nearer London or Edinburgh than Tokio or Shanghai—is the constant and necessary condition of success anywhere. The world is but one parish, and the Church is the one agency which can occupy the one field. A living home Church is essential to success among the heathen, and obedience among the heathen is essential to good work at home. It has been said that a man will rise no higher than his wife will let him; and certainly the work among the heathen will rise no higher than the workers at home allow, nor will the Church at home ever get away from the reflex influence of the Church in the regions beyond. The royal road to universal success and world-wide revival is a hearty response to the appeal of the open doors and the empty hearts which are everywhere crying out for help in the name of the Lord. Obedience brings revival, and revival brings the power to obey; and thus the ever-widening circles of grace spread out, and ever farther out, to the ends of the earth, like the circles on the surface of

a pool when a stone has been thrown into it. If there is to be recovery of power, there must be unity and prayer, and in turn nothing will make for unity and prayer like the recovery of power.

It may even be that the waves of revival which are to make all things new at home and to deliver the Church from heresy and indifference, worldliness and unbelief, will come homewards from the foreign field. That would be one other of the pathetic ironies of history; and there are many such, for God fulfils Himself in many ways. "The wind bloweth where it listeth"; and God may yet rebuke the pride of the Church of the white man by sending quickening and fresh revelation through the black man, or the yellow man, or the brown. But even so, the prayer of all who are truly in sympathy with the gracious purpose of salvation will be: "Come, Holy Spirit, come." "Come directly, or by way of the Far East, as seemeth good to Thee; but oh, come, and come quickly!"

CHAPTER X

THE CALL OF THE NEW ERA

"The night cometh, when no man can work."—JOHN 9. 4.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea we are now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures."—SHAKESPEARE.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."—TENNYSON.

"Nothing great was ever done without passion."—DIDEROT.

CHAPTER X

THE CALL OF THE NEW ERA

IT has already been insisted on that the supreme feature of this call is its urgency; but it is hardly possible to lay too much emphasis on this, or to reinforce it too strongly. In a quite unique sense this is the psychological moment for the Church and the regions beyond. Unless the Gospel enters by the opening doors, evil spirits will enter in to be the allies of those already entrenched, and the combination may be a menace even to the Christianity of the West, as well as to its Governments. The pagan deluge from the Far East may yet sweep on to the Nearer East, like the deluge from Mecca long ago; and who can tell whether there will be another Charles Martel to check it in its desolating career, or where the colour line might be drawn?

It is probably no exaggeration to say that so far as China is concerned the next ten years will decide its fate. That vast Empire, which is now

awakening so marvellously from the slumber of centuries, and which has in it such infinite possibilities, cannot remain as it is in religion, any more than in politics or trade. It may become Christian, or it may become agnostic. That Western civilisation will do its destructive work is certain; the only question is whether the Gospel will also do the constructive work which it alone can do. There is no lasting advantage in covering over red heathenism with a veneer of culture; and in sheer self-defence, if for no other reason, the Christians of the Occident should do their utmost to win the teeming millions of China for Christ while the golden moments last.

In recent years as many as 15,000 Chinese students have been in Tokio at one time; and no fewer than 1500 Japanese teachers are now at work throughout China. There are probably as many as 1000 Chinese students in attendance at the universities of Europe and America, picked men, who will go back with a message to them who sent them. The revolution is assured; the only question is under whose banner the awakened peoples are to move, and words cannot convey how all-important it is that they should be under Christian influences at such a formative time. All else depends on that.

Nor is it to China alone, or even to the Far

East alone, that this plea of urgency applies. Those who are entitled to speak say that, away on the very roof of the world, the new era, the psychological moment, has come also for the long-isolated land of Tibet; while among the semi-pagan peoples of South America, that continent which has been neglected so long, under the grotesque misconception that it was already Christianised, there are also strivings and yearnings which are equally full of promise and peril. But, indeed, that would seem to be true of all the pagan nations in this newest of new eras. It seems to be everywhere as it was in Europe on the eve of the Reformation; and vast changes are impending for weal or woe.

As set forth in the statement of the aims of the 1910 World's Missionary Conference in Edinburgh: "The contact of the East and the West is giving rise to a ferment of ideas in the world of human thought. It is hardly possible that the hoary civilisations of Asia should be subjected to the inrush of new ideas without an intellectual upheaval comparable to the movement which shook the life of Europe at the Renaissance, and possibly surpassing it in the far-reaching influence of its effects. Such a period of living mental activity at once affords an exceptional opportunity for the rapid spread of Christian ideas, and constitutes a

peril that will make severe demands on the courage and faith of the Christian Church. Of no less significance, from the Christian point of view, is the wakening of a new national spirit among non-Christian peoples. If enlightened and quickened by a true vision of Christ, this new spirit may be the means of regenerating the national life; while, on the other hand, if Christ should seem in the eyes of these peoples to be Western only, it may build up barriers that may exclude His Gospel from these lands for centuries." "There can only be one issue," it has been said; "the strongest life will prevail."

But there can be no question as to which is the strongest life, if only it is brought to bear on the situation in the right way. "What East London needs is Christianity," said a social worker once. "No," said another; "what East London needs is Christians." And he was right. What the heathen peoples need is Christians, for even the Gospel must become concrete in human lives before it can carry everything before it; and it is not so much Christianity as Christians who are on their trial now, and who can doubt what their response would be if they could only realise what the actual issues are? When continental parliaments have voted any question urgent, they suspend all other business until it has been dealt with. They sit *die in*

diem until it has been settled, on the principle that everything else must wait.

So at this juncture the Church and the State alike should vote urgency for the appeal of the new era and the awakening lands, yielding to its summons or lure, and claim all its possibilities for Christ in that Divine strength which the making of such a claim never fails to bring with it. Even as Cato had it in the Roman Senate at all times and seasons, "*Delenda est Carthago*"—Carthage must be destroyed—so the Christian patriot should have it in season and out of season: "The heathen must be won for Christ"; "Christ must be the Leader of the new nations, the supreme Hero of the new era." It mattered not what else Rome did so long as her cruel and remorseless foe was not crushed; and unless the Gospel can use this new opportunity, and prove itself Divine in this ordeal of the nations, nothing else the Church may do in theology or social enterprise will long avail. It may even be now or never so far as this era is concerned, and not a few think it may be the last era. And whether that be so or not, it is certain that we have come once again to a flood-tide in the affairs of men; to one of the formative periods or water-sheds in history, to a supremely critical era, which must be a savour either of life unto life or of death unto death.

Decisions made at such an epoch have a sadly weird permanence which is all their own—just as no nation is Protestant now which stood for obscurantism and privilege after the first shock of the Reformation conflict was over. After Niagara is passed, the stream may soon seem to flow as peaceably as it did before it was caught in the mad swirl of the flood; but in reality it can never be quite the same after it has gone down the falls.

But, further, this new era comes with a call to the whole Church to avail herself of all the inventions, discoveries, and political changes which have thrown the world open to the Missionary as it never was before. All these must be claimed and occupied for Christ and His service. How small the Mission world has recently become, and how manageable, compared with what it used to be! Yet at the same time, how large it has become all at once! There are so many open doors now that men have ceased to remark about them. Indeed, all the doors are open now; hermit nations and walled-in lands no longer exist in the old sense. Think, too, of how different a voyage to the East is in our day, with swift and well-appointed liners, compared with what it meant for Ziegenbalg or even for Duff. Think also of what steam and electricity have done to render for ever impossible

the terrible isolation into which Livingstone and even Paton entered when they passed beyond the zone of civilisation and entered the heathen wilds. A Missionary from Great Britain at work in Manchuria is now not a month apart from his friends at home, and may be said to be in continuous touch with them.

The ends of the earth have come on us, and ere long the aeroplane may join hands with wireless telegraphy, as another Divine agent for the conquest of space and for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the regions beyond. And every modern invention ought to be consecrated to the highest of all ends and made use of in the service of Christ. "From Him all skill and science flow"; and it is part of the charm of the new era, just as it is one of the reasons why there is a new era at all, that so many new forces are offering themselves that they may be harnessed to the Saviour's car. The Bible Societies and the Societies for the spread of Christian literature in the vernacular throughout the different lands must be strengthened and developed with all the resources of civilisation.

The enemy is using the printing press to flood lands like India and Japan with the worst products of Western infidelity and hatred of Christ; and the children of the Most High must be as ingenious and original as their foes in making

use of every agency to spread the knowledge of salvation through Christ. Even as Paul did, when Christ was preached through envy and strife, let us rejoice in everything which makes Him and His unique claims and gifts available for those who are ignorant of Him and His grace.

Those must be deaf indeed who do not hear in all the social and political changes which have been taking place throughout heathendom, alike amid the nations with ancient civilisations and the tribes which are still savage, an imperative summons to enter in and make disciples of all these peoples in obedience to the Lord's command. The separating walls are crumbling to the dust. "Come over and help us," is the cry which is being borne on every wind, and may be heard in a multitude of tongues. Nor is it in any sense an indefinite call, although it has been so often slurred over as if it were. It is being expounded by a myriad of commentators for all who have eyes to read and hearts to understand. It is as clear and binding as any other command in the Word of truth. It is not for the élite alone, but for all who love the Lord Jesus and can tell in any way what He has done for them. It can be truly and effectively obeyed by all who wish to do His will.

Only some, of course, can obey it literally and go out to foreign lands. But far more might obey

it literally than do so, and even those who remain at home can and ought to obey it too. There are still many in the homelands who are not disciples; and the Christian call, as at first was the Christian practice, is to be a Missionary wherever one finds oneself. Then, as regards the work abroad, those who must stay at home can not only attend to the commissariat, and hold up the hands of their delegates and representatives at the front by their sympathetic, intelligent interest and their unceasing prayers; they can assail the same paganism as their comrades abroad.

Just like Mission work, paganism is one; and paganism in Britain is not essentially different from paganism in Japan. Nor is there any land where primæval paganism has ever been quite extirpated, nor any land where it may not again lift up its defiant head as the very Antichrist whom Christ must yet put under His feet. As we have seen in connection with the work in the Middle Ages, a great mass of paganism survived both outside and inside the Church of Rome, even in Europe. It was only scotched at the best, and never quite killed; and on the eve of the Reformation Pope Leo x. could speak of Christianity as having been a profitable fable for him and his. Philosophy had gone back to Aristotle, and Christian doctrine had been forced into pagan forms; while art had

gone back to naturalism. The Virgin and the saints as well as the Lord Himself took the place of the deities of Greece and Rome, to say nothing of still fouler cults. And although it is the case that the theology of paganism is now largely a thing of the past in the lands which have been Christianised, and that its science has not been able to abide the advent of the printing-press and the steam-engine, it would be a grievous blunder to imagine that paganism itself is extinct or effete even in the Christian lands.

Its temples are everywhere falling to pieces before the light of civilisation. That is part of the crisis which we have now to face. Yet heathenism not only endures, but is adapting itself to new conditions. It is even becoming Missionary in its old strongholds, while it is reacting in more ways than one on the religious life of the homelands. Until the nations have been actually won for Christ, in reality as well as in name, the dark shadow of paganism will remain, even where men know that the theoretical basis of the old faiths is ridiculous and incredible.

It has been calculated by experts in such matters that over against the 3,000,000 of converts who were won from heathenism by Christian Missions during the nineteenth century, the population of that heathen world increased by no fewer than

200,000,000 during the same period. It is a colossal error to think of paganism as if it were negative merely, the absence of light; or that all that is needed for reformation is that the light of the truth should shine into the darkness. Nothing is farther from the truth than that the heathen nations are so conscious of their defects that they welcome the truth whenever it is rightly presented to them. Paganism is positive in its opposition to the truth; a dense enveloping black fog which distorts and bewilders, and which persists when, according to every theory, it ought to have vanished for ever. The alternatives with which the Church of Christ is faced are not, either to let things go on as they are, or win the nations for the Gospel. They are in reality, either to conquer heathenism in the strength of God, or to be conquered by it. Nothing is more obvious from what has taken place in the past than that the sands of paganism can drift in from the desert until the garden of the Lord is only a waste, and the candlestick has been removed.

And after all, in many essential respects, modern materialism, as it is practised and as it works out in ordinary life, is simply paganism brought up to date and adapted to the conditions of Western culture. Even its morality tends to become pagan, and indeed cannot but be pagan when once the

restraints of the Christian traditions and the Christian environment, which may persist long after faith has departed, have finally passed away. It does not even deliver men from superstition, and still less does it set them free from intolerance or the *odium theologicum*; for nothing in modern life has been more persecuting than some of the attacks of the secularists, in high stations and in low, on the freedom of the children of God.

Materialism ends by destroying the sense of personal responsibility. There is no Supreme Being left to whom man can be accountable; nor, indeed, is there any man left to be accountable. For what meaning has either praise or blame, or such terms as good or bad, for one who is no more than a fortuitous concourse of atoms? There is not much left that is worth having, after it has been authoritatively announced that "we are what we eat." Charity and compassion are ridiculous and pernicious interferences with the only sacred things that are left—the gods of the materialistic Israel, the survival of the fittest, and the struggle for existence. Whenever materialism is logical, it can have no more respect than paganism has for freedom of opinion, noble motives, patriotic yearnings, or strivings after holiness. Indeed, it has less respect for such things than paganism at its best, since for it they are but the necessary outcome

of inevitable and impersonal molecular changes. Materialism, just like paganism, would crush out as peculiarly hateful everything connected with the love and grace of God; and especially everything connected with that great doctrine of the forgiveness of sins which lies at the foundation of the Christian hope and is the inspiration of those who labour among the weary and heavy-laden, the corner-stone of salvation by the blood of Christ.

There is therefore Mission work at his own door which every Christian is called to do, whether he is in a foreign land or in a Christian land; work, too, in which enormous difficulties must be faced, and in which glory may be won. Indeed, it may be questioned whether Foreign Mission work can prosper unless Home Mission work is being eagerly carried on, any more than the work at home can prosper if the great lone lands of the heathen are overlooked. Every Christian at home ought to have his deputies abroad if he cannot go there himself; but no believer can do all his work by deputy. He can only work through others in proportion as he is doing work himself. He can only do his part in the great organism of the Body of Christ through co-operation with all the other members of the Church; and for that he must find work to do among the heathen wherever his lot has been cast. Those who are blind to

the hands which beckon in either sphere will not be of much avail in the other, whichever it may be; and to this it may be added that those who can listen without anguish and effective response to the dumb yearnings and the summons too deep for words of the empty hearts and broken lives either here or yonder—and there seem to be many such—have but little ground for believing that Jesus of Nazareth, Who came from heaven to earth to seek and save the lost, is their Saviour and Lord. At any rate, they have little of His spirit or mind.

This call of the new era, further, comes with a most impressive appeal to all the scattered branches of the Church of the living God, alike in the homelands and in the foreign field, to make their unity manifest, and to be one in presence of all the forces which are contending for the mastery, that the whole world may believe that the Father sent His Son to be Saviour and King. The work is far too great to be done by any section of the Church, and while there may be advantages in emulation and even in rivalry up to a certain point, the work which endures is not done along these lines, but through a Church at one in its consecration. The work is sufficient to tax all the resources of the Church; and there should be no waste, nor any useless competition in one field

while other fields are left unoccupied. What is needed is consecrated unity, and a great supreme effort all along the line such as will submerge all the miserable divisions and rivalries at home in an all-absorbing yearning and endeavour to win all men for Christ.

It will not suffice to employ the utmost resources of our modern civilisation, unless we also supply the unity which, as Christ has so clearly indicated, is a condition of success in this very work of convincing the world that He is the Messiah. In spite of all the painful travesties of it which history has seen, catholicism must be the Church's ideal; and she must earnestly seek to attain it, and be prepared to make sacrifices to attain it, in face of all obstacles. The schismatic spirit is hateful and treasonable anywhere; but it is peculiarly obnoxious in presence of the heathen, as if Christ were divided. And it is full of significance that the work of reunion has begun on the foreign field, and that already Churches which have not yet been able to unite their forces at home have united them out at the front, where Satan's synagogue is. Just as in Canada the movement for the union of the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists in one great Evangelical Church—a movement which is full of hope as it is of daring—has been inspired and mightily reinforced by the

needs of the Far West into which emigrants are for ever pouring, so it is the pressure of the problems of heathenism which is forcing the Churches into line with each other in the regions beyond.

In India the representatives of no fewer than six Churches have become one Presbyterian Church, and it is said that others will join them. And this young Church is making very gratifying progress. Its congregations increased from 115 in 1906 to 125 in 1907; its communicants from 15,772 to 16,085; and its baptized adherents from 31,335 to 37,514. During that same year the number of baptisms was 5220, of which not fewer than 2674 were those of adults. In Calcutta, too, the colleges of the Established Church of Scotland and of the United Free Church of Scotland have now joined their forces and become one institution for permeating the new learning in India with the doctrine and Person of Christ and for the training of native Indians to evangelise their fellow-countrymen. The same unifying process is going on in Madras, and its great Christian College. The State connection, which is still a barrier between these two Churches at home, does not exist abroad, and so they can be one there, although still separated in Scotland.

In Japan for years now there has been union

among the converts of the various Protestant Missions; and in all new Missions care should be taken to heal the breaches before they are made, by working in unity from the first. It is far from improbable that, just as the great revival for which Christendom is agonising, and without which she cannot live, may come by way of the foreign field, the impulse and power which are needed for the union which Christ desires may come from the same quarter. It may well be that the pressure from abroad will enable the home Churches to see things from the Divine standpoint and in their right relations and proportions, and promote a true unity, in which there will be room for charity in all things, along with unity in essentials and liberty in non-essentials, combined with the wisdom truly to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, and to see past everything else to their Divine Head. Well may all believers pray and work for such a consummation; for it is thus that God incites His people to obedience and reveals Himself to those who do His will in child-like simplicity and sincerity.

This loud call of the new era is greatly accentuated and reinforced by the extraordinary activity of the enemies of the Christian faith. They too seem to be impressed by the urgency of the crisis, and are making use of all the resources of civilisation

and all the inventions and changes through which God is inciting His people to dare and do great things for Him. In only too many instances, indeed, there is a malignity in the opposition which is shown to Christ and those who are forward to serve Him, and especially to those who go out into the heathen darkness with His light in their hands, which is comparable only to the work of the demons who assailed our Lord when He was here on the earth in the days of His flesh.

Once again the Satanic kingdom is measuring all its might with the might of the King. The powers of darkness are all alive to the full significance and possibilities of the new situation, and are on the alert to attain the victory for that "mystery of iniquity" which from Apostolic times until now has worked so much woe. There is a certain encouragement in all this activity, and it should nerve every Christian to the utmost to secure the conquest for Christ. For all we know, it may be that these evil forces, these unclean powers of the pit, are marshalling for the Armageddon in which the last battle will be fought out; and unless believers everywhere unite to enter in and occupy when their Lord is ready to march at their head, their opportunities may quickly be lost, and the black flag of the enemy of souls may float over the strongholds which

should have been won for the King. That the enemy is so active and so mischievous and malignant is, of course, a tribute to the activity of the Church in spite of all her divisions and worldliness; for he is always ready to leave the Church alone if she leaves him alone: but it must never be taken for granted, in any particular conflict, that the enemy of souls is bound to be overcome.

Truth is great, and will prevail. Christ is to reign until He has put everything hostile under His feet; but there may be many victories for the evil before the final victory of Christ. This is a fallen world, but it is a redeemed world; and it is inconceivable that the final result can mean anything else than victory for the pure and true: yet the enemy who triumphed in Asia Minor and North Africa, the enemy who sowed the tares of Socinianism and Unitarianism in the Churches of the Reformation, the enemy who has sowed sedition even among Missionaries with the blackness all around, may triumph once again and for a time in Great Britain or Japan. In presence of a materialistic science, which is seeking to replace the old paganism with the new; in presence of Islam, with its efforts after expansion and its dreams of reform; in presence of rationalism eating into the vitals of Protestantism, and sacerdotalism degrading so much of Romanism—there is everything

in the call which the new era addresses to the faithful in all the Churches that can appeal to courage and heroism, to loyalty to Christ and compassion for the souls of men.

The battle will not be won either by mechanism or magic. In the final issue, neither mere orthodoxy nor mere organisation will avail. There must be living faith in Christ, prompt obedience to His call; devoted, grateful service even to the death. This kind goeth not out but by prayer; and nothing less than a living, self-denying Christianity can conquer heathenism as it now confronts us for freedom or truth. All else is but ploughing the sands or beating the air.

But, further, this call of the new era comes to us not only reinforced by the activity of the King's foes, but also by the very difficulty and complexity of the situation. Those who think merely of open doors are seeing only one side of the shield. In every sense of the term, the situation is critical, and there is the utmost need for the organisation of all the Church's resources even from the viewpoint of self-defence. There are those on the other side who dream dreams of sweeping Christianity out of the way. At best, we are told, it can only be incorporated, and taken up into the new religion, which is to embody all that is best in all the older theologies and faiths, as something which may have

been of use in the evolution of the race, but has had its day, and must now give place to something better which will preserve all that is good in it.

The battle which is now joined is one in which no terms will be given. It is a battle to the death—or rather, as Christians believe, to the life. It is a battle, too, which can only be won by a citizen army, and the whole army must not only be mobilised but actually engaged on the field. Ingenuity and originality must be shown in the strategy; and we should not only never despise the foe, we should be willing to learn from him. Every atom of strength must be used; and instead of slurring over the dangers and difficulties, they should be insisted on as adding to the urgency of the appeal. It is more than probable that the heroic element in the Church would respond eagerly to such an appeal. As a matter of experience, it is not the call to a "walk over," or to a "demonstration in force," which has hitherto roused the Missionary spirit most and made common men heroes, but the summons to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

It has been remarked of the Church of Rome that she never abates her claims, and that that has been one of the secrets of her success, such as it has been. And if this sometimes becomes an appeal to carnal pride, it need not be so; even

as Christ appealed to His own generation to leave all and follow Him, so He still appeals to the best and noblest in man, and calls for those who will storm the breach and face the hope which is forlorn only in name, since He is Leader and Lord. Nor should the failures and defeats of the campaign be concealed from the rank and file, lest they should be discouraged and faint in their minds. There has never been such readiness to confess Christ as when confession meant persecution and perhaps death; and the men and women through whom the world will be won for righteousness and truth are just those who will be incited by the difficulties and dangers of the situation; true knights of God as they assuredly are.

In this connection it is noteworthy that whatever posts may appeal in vain for volunteers, that has never been true of the places which meant facing the deadly fever and taking up the work of those who had fallen on the battlefield. If it be true that even in the midst of the revival in Manchuria it has been difficult to get workers from the homelands, it is also true that out on the Congo, where so many have fallen, there has never been lack of true-hearted men and women to take their places. The fascination of Africa has been felt in the Mission field as well as in connection with travel and exploration; and that so many have perished in

its wilds has not hindered, but has rather encouraged, others to follow in their train.

From all this it follows that the Intelligence Department in the Missionary warfare should be specially busy and well equipped, and that knowledge should be spread everywhere regarding the present crisis, with all its promises and all its risks. It is all very well to "muddle through somehow"; but it is far better to give the King of our very best in every department, and to go through with open eyes and intelligent outlook.

The idea which is now being developed of Mission Study Circles is splendid, and capable of vast usefulness. God never works by magic, other than the magic of faith; and if the Church is to see her sons and daughters respond to the cry, "Come over and help us," she must bring every legitimate influence to bear on them, and let them know the facts of the case. Obscurantism is of no avail; and no part of the Church's work has less need to fear the light than the imperialism of the Gospel, which claims the whole round earth for Christ, and therefore for civilisation and freedom. It was through Mission study—the circle or band sometimes consisting of only one member—that the best of our Missionaries were sent out to their work. Carey made his cobbler's shed a Missionary college. It was the reading

of Missionary letters in his Sabbath-school by the minister of an obscure country congregation which made James Chalmers determine as a boy that, God helping him, he would be a Missionary.

Those who think that men can be swept into this work by blind impulse know little of its history. Splendid as it is when the brightest and best among our youth volunteer under the influence of stirring appeals, it is altogether necessary that their decision to be Missionaries should be based on knowledge of what is to be done and how it must be done. And it is a lamentable fact that even yet, in spite of the liberal use which is now being made of the printing-press, the ignorance which prevails about Missions all round is as stupendous as it is shameful. The ordinary press may have ceased to sneer at Missions, but it is as little interested as ever in their real work. Not a few, too, even of those who contribute mechanically and regularly to Mission funds, do so without any adequate knowledge or interest, and are consequently unable to follow their givings with their prayers as they ought. Nothing but ignorance, alike of the Bible and of what is being done for perishing souls, can account for the indifference of many who say that Christ has redeemed them ; while as for the actual opposition of some who profess to be Christians

even in this new and inspiring era, it can only perish through the truth, as to what is being done and what ought to be done, falling on it, like some foul fungus which cannot abide the light.

It may readily be admitted that Missionaries have not always been heroic, or their supporters always wise; and that we may learn many things from the nations beyond the pale, and be interested in "native ways of expressing sacred truths," without acting as if believers in Christ have any alternative to obeying His express orders and making Him known everywhere. Philosophers may discuss whether Christianity is the final religion; but it is treason for Christians to act as if that could conceivably be an open question for them. Yet some who bear Christ's name speak of it being better in some cases to leave heathen men and women in their heathenism, and of it being necessary for some tribes that they should reach Christ by way of Islam. Truly the need for knowledge, and of knowledge that will move the heart and touch the emotions as well as inform the mind, is very great; and some who cannot go abroad might give compensation by collecting and scattering such knowledge all around, and putting the darkness to flight.

There ought to be the same keen interest among Christians at home in what is going on among

their brethren in the foreign field that there is in a time of war in what is happening at the front. It is said that Sunday newspapers, that unhappy product of modern civilisation, got a footing in America during the Civil War, because the people could not wait till Monday for the Sunday's news; and that eagerness for information is a picture of the interest which the Church at home should take in the doings of her soldiers away out in the conflict with heathen darkness.

But the contrast between that, or anything like that, and what actually obtains is very obvious. All the resources of literature and the platform, of the printing-press and lantern-slides, should be employed to spread the light, and everything should be up-to-date. It is more than time that some of the stock pictures, of tidy little congregations listening to a preacher in full clerical attire, under a grove of palm trees, and the like, found their way to the limbo of forgotten lore. If only the boys and girls, the young men and women, who are growing up in the Church, knew better what is being done, and how much might and ought to be done, there would soon be kindled such a fire of enthusiasm as would bring sturdy volunteers everywhere into the field, and would cause the Church to rise as she has never yet done to the height of her calling in Christ. Nor

need there be any fear as to the result of introducing disintegrating forces among the tribes and nations to which we carry the mighty solvents of Christianity and civilisation.

The call of the new era is to give all men everywhere the very best we have, and that involves giving them the Gospel of the grace of God. Tremendous as is the responsibility of introducing such a disintegrating spirit into the life of another civilisation, it is a vastly greater responsibility for Christians to refuse obedience to the Divine command, and fail to introduce the only power that can truly reintegrate society and reconstruct it on a permanent and just basis. So long as Christians are acting in obedience to their Lord, and do it in His spirit, they may leave the responsibility and the results to Him. Sin has already done the disintegrating work, and those who know the Gospel are called to throw the healing salt into the springs of life. In any case, we may take it that Herbert Spencer was right when he said: "The highest truth the wise man sees, he will fearlessly utter: knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world; knowing that, if he can effect the change he aims at—well; if not—well also, but not *so* well."

The wise Missionary will never seek to transplant

what is accidental in Occidental Christianity into the Orient, or what is merely Anglo-Saxon in Church government amongst races altogether alien in habit and origin. Nor will he ever allow himself to be a political agent, or the mere forerunner of the trader. In his love for those among whom he labours, and in his loyalty to their national aspirations and love of freedom, he will be jealous for all their rights, and will put his trust in what is essential in the Gospel, and make Christ Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. And thus, in the great work of winning the heathen for the Lord, there is need for infinite wisdom, just as there is scope for the exercise of every other gift and grace.

The equipment of the Missionaries of the twentieth century is set forth in the high calling of the Evangelist of the first. They are to unite, as those sent forth as sheep among wolves, the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove. They are to have that good sense and insight without which the work can never be carried on with success. They must be able to make the most of their circumstances, and be men of affairs, wise administrators, and statesmanlike leaders. They must reflect deeply on the ways and means which will lead them to the goal, and

choose the best. Yet alongside of this there must also be the simplicity of the dove, lest humble trust in the Divine guidance should be replaced by self-seeking and self-conceit. The union of these two sets of qualities is the ideal set before the Missionary by his Lord. Mere cleverness or even ability is not enough, and yet there is no virtue in being gullible. But to add the harmlessness of the dove to the wisdom of the serpent is the highway to victory.

Thus does the Call of the New Era come to us, with all the ages behind it to give it weight and emphasis; and not one accent of the messages of the past need be ignored as we listen to the orders for the new day, remembering always that with every new summons to service there comes the promise of grace to obey, if there be the will to obey, and that as our days are so shall our strength be. And now is the judgment of this world.

1. The era of Old Testament preparation, within the fence and beyond, unites with the new era to say that the will of God is that all men should be saved. "Behold, all souls are Mine," is still the Divine reminder; they are all of one blood, and the knowledge of the Lord shall yet

cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill laid low."

2. The first Christian century unites with the latest to say that there must be no geographical limitations in the outlook of the believer; that the Gospel is meant for all and adapted to the needs of all; that it can lay hold of all who need it, and that all men need it. Other religions have their zones of vegetation, beyond which they cannot thrive; but Christianity can flourish wherever man can live. It is for the Bushman and Eskimo, as well as for the cultured and developed peoples; for the ancient and the modern, for the Occident and the Orient alike. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," is still the Divine command and will.

3. The generations which saw the Empire of Rome overrun by the emissaries of Christ unite to say to our generation that every believer is called to be a Missionary, and that every congregation of the saints should be a centre of light in the midst of the darkness and sin. Wherever the Christian finds himself—in peace in his own home, or in flight as a martyr for the truth—to

the extent of his opportunities, he must let his light shine, and claim everyone he meets for the service of his Lord. The anvil wears out the hammer; and even if there is still persecution for those who are loyal to the Saviour, God honours courage and faithfulness; and the "Galilean" Who conquered long ago will assuredly conquer in the days to come, and the crowning victory may be near at hand.

4. The era of Missions to the Barbarians throughout Europe reminds our era that in the Kingdom of Christ there is to be neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian nor Greek; and that Christ is the great Leveller, who always levels up. It reminds us, too, that just in proportion as the spirit of priestcraft enters into the work, the hankering to lord it over Christ's heritage, so the true Missionary spirit dies out, and faith, on which all else depends, disappears with it. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump alike for evil or for good; and the "mystery of iniquity" can creep in like a blight or an untimely frost, until even the garden of the Lord becomes a dreary waste. There are blessed circles of grace in the history of the Kingdom; but there are also vicious circles, in which unbelief strengthens the forces which gave birth to it at first until the very sources of life are poisoned, the darkness accounted light,

the evil worshipped as good, and the Gospel wounded in the house of its friends.

5. The era of the Reformation, with all its grandeur and glory, has a very solemn message for our time. There may be clay mingled with the iron, and even the greatest and best may be short-sighted and one-sided. It is only as men do God's will that they can know His doctrine; and absorption in home problems and domestic struggles may exclude Foreign Mission work so that there is failure all along the line, both at home and abroad. The home problems cannot be solved except by a Church which is loyal to the whole counsel of God; there can be no enduring triumphs in the conflicts at home unless there are also victories abroad; the deadliest blow which can be struck at the work at home is to make it everything. Never was the unity of the work in all its branches more vividly enforced than in that age of giants, and never was the doom of one-sidedness more tragically set forth.

6. The Deformation era and ours agree in proclaiming that nothing can flourish unless Foreign Missions flourish; that heresy both in life and doctrine is inevitable unless there is obedience to

the marching orders of the Church, which are also its standing orders; and that paganism will not be neutral in the strife, even if the Church would fain come to terms with its ancient foe. The end of these things is death, and disobedience is the pathway to rationalism and doom. Everything which tends to drive the supernatural out of the ordinary daily life, and to belittle the miraculous, tends also to destroy the desire to win men for Christ anywhere; and equally, as a matter of course, whatever makes men haul down the flag of the Cross out at the front will send a chill to the heart of the Church at home and make everything common and unclean.

7. The wondrous Evangelical Revival with which the eighteenth century—that era of reaction and unbelief—came to an end and the nineteenth century—that era of enterprise and expansion—began, is the converse of all this, and sends on the same message to us from the other and gracious side. Carey is the co-worker of Simeon; Claudius Buchanan joins hands with Wilberforce in the work of reform; Ziegenbalg and Francke conquer space in the unity of the Spirit and of the Body of Christ. The true impulse of humanity knows nothing of geographical limitations, and the tide of reform which comes through the revival of

heart-religion flows into every creek. The feet of him who brings the good tidings cross the seas and tarry not until he has been in every land. Not only are the home and foreign departments one, when seen from the standpoint of the eternal; social and religious reform are but one when the love-light of the Gospel is in men's eyes, and their hearts are tender because of what the great salvation has done for them.

8. The nineteenth century unites with the twentieth to tell of the first-fruits of the great harvest which is yet to fill all the earth with joy; and to show how every gift and grace, every revolution and discovery, can be consecrated to the highest and holiest ends. The increase in the Church abroad has been vastly greater than the increase at home; and although some imagine that everything is lost which is spent in the foreign field, that sphere is in no way a debtor to the Church at home. Nothing has brought such blessing to the Church in modern times as the work among the heathen; and, if only it be carried on to perfection, it will make all things new in heaven and on earth. Already many a promise has been illumined; whole tracts of Scripture have been interpreted by God's marvellous doings; and the entire theology of the Evangelical Churches

has been interpenetrated by a new and more tender spirit, as they have shared with Christ in the fellowship of His travail when nations long in darkness and death have been born in a day.

9. The twentieth century has opened with fulness of promise, but also with that fulness of responsibility which such promise never fails to bring. To all who have the vision of the unseen, or know anything of the open secret of God, it is saying that this is the judgment of this world and the crisis of the Church; that it may be now or never; and that what ought, in the great mercy of our God, to be a savour of life unto life, may be so perverted as to become a savour of death unto death. Never were events combining to say to all earnest and loyal souls with such solemnity and intensity: "Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work."

10. As for the Call of the New Era, all the eras unite with ours to make it both urgent and inspiring. In some ways ours is an age which is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and burdened with problems for which some see no other solution but through the destruction of law and order. But all around in the Mission field there is the sense of promise, almost of youth, as

great nations are casting off the sleep of ages and going forth as a strong man to run a race.

Once again God has come to His people with vast opportunities, and is calling all who are obedient to His will to use them in the light of the successes and failures of the ages which are gone. The Golden Age of the Gospel lies in front. It was not in Eden, but is still to come. "The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

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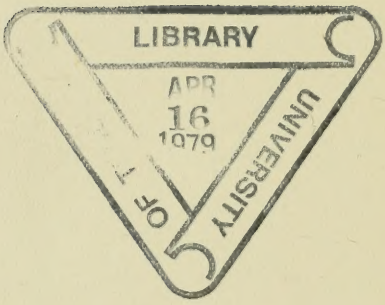
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